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Adamawa, 1893

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PREFACE

ONE OF THE most important problems connected with the study of history in Nigeria is that of the content and methods of history teaching in the schools. The Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria, held in December 1956, was concerned with the topic of history teaching in Nigerian secondary schools and teacher-training institutions. It was decided that several of the papers read to this congress should be published in the Journal. As these papers deal with different aspects of, and express different opinions about, this relatively specialised topic it was considered that they should be published alongside one another in this issue and together with other articles of more general historical interest.

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The articles on history teaching in Nigerian secondary schools and teacher-training institutions were first delivered as papers to the Congress of the Historical Society in December, 1956. The article by Mr. H. F. C. Smith has been rewritten and extended for publication though the argument remains the same as that of the original paper.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND BENIN ARCHITECTURE

by

A. J. H. GOODWIN

EXCAVATIONS in Benin City, Western Nigeria during two dry seasons have somewhat forcibly impressed upon me the difficulties of the essentially stratigraphical problem of developing a basic chronological pottery sequence for West Africa. Any attempt to use this approach may need careful review in the light of cultural patterns which include even simple architectural forms and traditions such as were encountered here.

In studying a relatively advanced culture we make free and consistent use of pottery; in fact, the late Sir Flinders Petrie built his reputation upon the painstaking development of a Near East chronology based upon the complex story of potsherds (Sequence Dating). On the one hand the story of pottery is a true evolution; individual taste and character, expressed in form, substance and design, create both evolving and divergent series. On the other hand, potmaking being essentially a feminine pursuit, new strands from outside traditions tend to weave and filter into local fabrics, accruing from the chances of exogamy and the capture of womenfolk. These accretions become fixed in their new cultural environment through emulation, fashion and education, and at times by meeting new needs that have come in with the pot forms. A series of contacts, nuptial, predatory or mercantile, can be observed and can often be followed into other areas, providing us with the very important element known as cross-dating which links together the sequence dating of different areas. This gives a three-dimensional pattern that is analysed in the light of both distribution and stratigraphy—area and sequence.

From our knowledge of spacious pastoral or peasant life in the great zone of grass and parkland Africa, where cities hardly exist and even towns are rare, we of the south and east assume that all African people live comfortably on a flat floor on any level site. If a hut or a hamlet is replaced it may by sheer chance overlie the rubble of an earlier settlement, but in the vast proportion of instances it will be built on virgin soil. There is thus no stratigraphy of importance; simple superposition is seldom repeated under the regime of transhumance and nomadism that marks African cultivation. In general the pattern in the Velds Zone is oversimplified, far too inadequately stratified to yield evidence of chronological value.

Here erosion is more important than the building up of soils; sherds are likely to be scattered and mixed, but not stratified and separated by time.

In the West African Forest Region there is a sharp contrast with this state of affairs; here forest humus has accumulated; while the tendency has been for cities to develop within walled areas, thus focusing pottery and other remains into what should be a stratified deposit.

Traditional Houses

In Benin City and in varying degrees in other cities it is the pride of senior chiefs to maintain at least a section of their official residences in traditional manner. When excavating in Benin for the Survey of Antiquities of Nigeria and with the cooperation and help of the Benin Native Administration, I was able to inspect half-a-dozen of these traditional houses. Even a cursory examination suggested dangers that would arise in relying upon stratigraphy and depth below surface alone in assessing relative age. Happily, having been forewarned, a more cautious approach could be made, and I could attempt to unravel the physical evidence in the light of the existing architecture I had observed.

Careful observation of these buildings, set in this congested focus within the great encircling city walls, showed how complex the pattern of things can be within the soils of forested West Africa. Here we should have a set of problems similar to those arising in the *tels* of Mesopotamia, but, owing to high rainfall and a sylvan environment, the deposits are in fact very different.

In its essentials the complicated traditional Bini architecture depends upon two fundamental factors: environment (including climatic and other conditions and those natural resources available to meet these) and the complex religion of the aristocracy.

It strikes the theoretical environmentalist as curious that, in spite of intense rainfall for eight months of the year and in spite of abundant forest timber, the Bini house should at first sight seem so deliberately and habitually inefficient. The diffusionist may laudably presume blind borrowing. A more careful analysis shows that, while the observable local difficulties might well have been met in a variety of ways, the traditional pattern that has been hammered out through the ages is in fact a fairly efficient one. Environment has governed architecture and structure, essentially rectangular as it generally is in forest country where great timber trees have to be disposed of: religion has decreed the plan, adapted to a strong tradition.

Builders Problems

In grassless reed-free forests such as typify parts of Southern Nigeria, the prevailing roof-covering consists of a wide glossy leaf somewhat resembling those of the *strelitzia* and *canna*. These are

made into a shingle or slat by being attached to a midrib of palm perhaps two feet long. These are lapped over one another from the eaves to the roof-ridge on a roof-structure broadly similar to our own. The leaves curl as they dry and the protection is inefficient. This means that heavy overlapping and a thick pad of leaves are needed. In rainy weather the thatch tends to hold water and weight is increased, so that the wet thatch becomes a heavy burden on the underlying structure, and here new difficulties arise.

The tough ferruginous soil, weathered under tropical conditions from a vast shield of igneous rock, makes excellent adobe walls that harden on drying to the strength of soft baked brick, but which take in water for an inch or more in the heavy wet season. They then begin to scale, unless protected by a good surface-dressing and deep eaves. In those houses that can boast an architecture, the dressing consists of a fine clay from the same source as the wall earth, but of a consistency fine enough to be far less permeable by water, and of a redder colour. This clay is applied to outside walls to a thickness of an inch or less, and smoothed into four-inch wide horizontal fluting with the great African snail-shell. This same clay dressing is used on floors and sometimes for decorative effect on the inside walls of the more important ceremonial rooms. On the floors frequent additions are made so that in the course of years the red clay dressing may build up to a thickness of two or three inches.

With the presence of abundant timber-trees one might suppose that the problem of eaves could readily be met, but, with the weight of heavy thatch, the earth walls of one to two feet in thickness are hardly adequate for an extra burden of good timbering. Clearly this could normally be met by using heavy uprights in the walls to support the wallplate of timber on which the roof rests, but termites would destroy such pillars in a year or two, and once again the roof would rest on rain-doomed walls, overhanging the unsuspecting inhabitants. This interlocking pattern of roof-stresses, rainfall, eaves, termites and wall-structure has been dealt with by the Bini in their own peculiar way.

Meeting the Problems

The earthen walls are built in stretcher-courses, or strips of earth the width of the wall and about twenty inches high, a typical West African system whatever the architecture. Each course is left to harden and dry out before the next is added. A Bini commoner is permitted four such stretchers by custom, a chief five or six, and the Oba or king may have more. In spite of the clay facing or dressing, the stretchers tend to open at their joints after a year or two. On this wall, containing no wooden supports, is laid the wall-plate of timber, a trunk of some four inches in diameter well above the likelihood of discovery by termites. Their approach-saps are carefully watched for and cleaned off as they appear.

Now it follows that the total weight of the roof must be light

enough for rain-sodden walls to carry, even when thatch is wet, but that the overhanging eaves must be deep enough to protect the walls from all but driven rain. Thus, in spite of abundant forest timber, the thinnest efficient poles are used as roof-beams (2ins. diam.), as purlins and struts (1½ins. diam.), and as thatching laths or withies (1in. diam.). The roof timbers have to be pegged with strings to the junction of the top two stretchers to guard against tropical winds. The inadequate thatch enforces a pitch steep enough to drain the curling leaves, and this gives a cross-section approximating to that of an isosceles triangle (60°), but this slope helps to protect the walls more adequately at their thinner tops. With light timbering and a steep roof-pitch a total width of roof of only 14-18ft. is possible, and part of this is taken up by the eaves and wall-thickness, leaving a true internal span of 10 to 14ft. As custom and religion demand that an aristocratic house should measure perhaps 40 by 80 feet, there are further difficulties to be overcome.

This delicate balance between traditional need and resources has been curiously met. The key to Bini architecture and traditional structure lies in the rule that *walls are to be protected at the expense of rooms*. Whether some inspiration came from Roman or other sources (which is just possible) the result has been an impluvium, set in an environment where rain is more of a danger than an urgent need. Four roofs surround each room, supported generally upon the outer and inner walls of a passage, or partly on a proscenium to be described later. The outward drainage of the walls is normal, but the inward drainage, from a catchment about equivalent to the floor space, pours into the living space—and this in a land of heavy rainfall (200cms.). The hole through which the water falls allows a pleasant access of light (albeit too intense at mid-day) but has to be allowed for during the long wet season. The answer is a drainage sump. The major part of the floor of each room consists of a large rectangular central sump, set 10-12ins. (25-30cms.) below living level and of necessity measuring more than the area of the square aperture left between the four converging roofs. This is clearly not for water storage, as from this sump an underground drain leads out of the house, often with a sunken pot-neck as the mouth. The surrounding living space is limited by the sump and so consists mainly of a low platform, three feet wide, and either bunks are recessed or space is left for an altar in the walls, often to displace what would otherwise be a passageway. The pattern is much the same along all four walls. Each bunk or altar-space has a proscenium-like opening under a hardwood architrave with a span of eight feet or so.

Unless the factors enumerated are all considered together, the Bini system of building suggests a ludicrous imitation of some North African Roman pattern, better suited to the needs of a dry country. But once these local factors and limitations are appreciated and recognized, the need for any exotic origin falls away.

Today squared timber, dipped into a preservative, and light-weight corrugated iron or aluminium have together solved the major difficulties. Bini architecture has lost in quaintness and appeal what it has gained in cheap efficiency.

Every Room a Chapel

In contrast to the structural architecture, the basic plan was governed primarily by religious considerations. Two types of structure result, which can (for immediate purposes only) be dubbed altars and shrines. The former are an intrinsic part of the structure of the house, allowed for in the plan; the latter are additions or may even stand apart. Each consists of a solid erection of earth suited to its functions, and sacrifices, offerings and libations are regularly made at each. Their very solidity makes them important to the excavator.

The setting of the altar generally consists of a great apse across one side or end, a few feet short of the width or length of the room to allow for a doorway from a passage or lobby. Like the sleeping bunks it is recessed to the depth of the width of the passage (about 2ft. 6ins.) with the thickness of the proscenium wall added. This proscenium opening is made good as a roof support by an architrave of mahogany or other hardwood, twelve or fifteen feet long, set six or seven feet above the living platform. These are the only heavy timbers in the house and cover a span of eight or ten feet, resting upon the well-protected inside walls. They are adzed to shape and were often carved. In the Oba's palace and possibly in some chiefs' houses they were plated with beaten brass sheet, embossed into various traditional designs, representing twisted rope etc. and tacked into place with imported staples or cut-tacks of brass or copper, often an inch long.

Within this stage-like recess is the altar proper. Running longitudinally for its full length to form the various levels of the altar are three steps of earth coated with red clay, such as also covers the floors and lower parts of the walls, but not the sump. The lowest step above the living platform may act as a bench or seat and before it is set the chair or stool of the chiefly owner. In the case of the paternal altar the uppermost step may bear carved wooden heads (sometimes covered with brass strip) that symbolise different male ancestors in a purely traditional, stylized pattern. Above and behind these, stand the carved wooden sceptres or staves of chiefly ancestors. These are tapped to call the attention of the appropriate ancestor to an offering or a supplication. With them stand the curious leaf-shaped, purely ceremonial spear-swords, whose resemblance to traditional canoe-paddles on neighbouring rivers is too striking to be ignored. The centre step bears dishes and receptacles for offerings. In these lie animal skulls and a seemingly haphazard collection of cowries and trinkets though each oblation is appropriate to the altar concerned. (Figure 1).

The maternal altar is similar. In place of the carved heads it is decorated with wooden effigies of stylized cocks—possibly guinea-fowl. It is generally smaller and less centrally placed. Another low altar may represent the gods of childhood, where children lay their little offerings, or libations are made on their behalf by their parents in case of need.

Tableaux of the Gods

A second, most dramatic unit attached to certain houses fixed by tradition, is made up of a great clay tableau of the polytheon of gods. These tableaux, devoutly maintained, are the visible representation of the most interesting and complex polytheistic religion in Africa, a religion shared by most tribes of Western Nigeria with tribal variations.

In the centre sits Olokun, God of the Sea and Riches, his two arms supported in royal Bini fashion by two attendants (Figure 2). Olokun may be life-sized or even larger. Flanking this group, on an appropriately smaller scale may be minor gods and goddesses seated in Olympian style, gazing with unseeing eyes of clay into the room. Below these, at the extreme wings, may be all or some of several other (by no means negligible) figures. Esu, God of Craftiness and Power, may be represented by a formless upright object like a tree-trunk. A crab-like human head, with a pair of human arms and four human legs, represents Ofoe, the messenger of Ogi-Uwu the "king of Death." A European may symbolize Knowledge and a stiff Nigerian policeman may suggest the forces of Law and Order. These two are recent additions to the pantheon, and perhaps there are others I have not seen. On the opposite flank sits Osa, the Supreme Being, looking along the row of clay figures in calm surveillance, but taking no active part.

This polytheon hardly forms an altar, as the figures stand free of the wall on a raised step, though generally in a building separate from the house proper. In three of the instances I have examined this forms a completely separate building, and in two there is no impluvium, the roof being fully closed over a chamber that is narrow in one dimension.

The side altars used for offerings to these figures consist of a dozen or more stable-like stalls, built along the two flanking walls, supported on a doubling of the wall foundations, or set into the thickened wall, at a height of about 30 inches above the floor. Each of these 15 inch stalls or side-altars contains a medley of little offerings. Each is a separate altar for a woman of the household or lineage. The chief priest (the head of the household) makes offerings at the feet of Olokun himself or at a separate ancestral shrine.

In certain homes, apparently depending upon the social or guild associations of the family, may be little altars two feet square, built out from the wall, dedicated to Ehi, the owner's spirit-counterpart or "Destiny" (Figure 1), or to his Hand, which is associated with his personal ability, or to Ogun the Smith who may also symbolize War

and Hunting. On these will generally be offerings of snails. Odd scraps of iron may be offered to Ogun as well as sacrifices of eggs or various appropriate animals. Any clever gadget or contraption may be placed here as an offering. I have seen an egg-whisk, parts of the differential of a car and several bicycle chains, all laid as conscious tributes to the smith's craftsmanship and inspired ingenuity.

Outside the Oba's palace, before each major chief's house, within each temple doorway and originally outside each gateway into the city, is a shrine to the *Idena*, the Keeper of the Gate. This is generally completely isolated, under a light, thatched shed, and may consist of a rough cube of earth, a metre or so in dimensions. As on the altars, square bronze bells, or iron rattles resembling socketed spearheads, are placed here. These are struck to attract the attention of the *idena* to any offerings or prayers. Libations are poured into funnel-shaped holes stoppered with upturned pots, and lose themselves in the earthen altar.

Altars and shrines may be decorated with cowry shells pressed into the clay, and more rarely a sun-lit floor may be so decorated in conventional patterns of men and plants as a tribute to the Sun, whose rays will fall on the decorated floor at sunset.

This whole pantheon seems largely to be governed by personal whim and loyalties, varying within the bounds of social acceptability.

Brief History

So much for the architectural structures demanded by the cultural and religious patterns of yesterday and today. Our own immediate problem—one of ethnology or recent history as approached by the techniques of archaeology—can be very briefly introduced as follows.

In December 1896, following the murder of a small British trade delegation halfway along the Gwato road, against the orders of the Oba Overami, a curious religious panic led (allegedly) to the daily sacrificing of some 300 slaves, in a lunatic effort to ward off and frustrate the expected British punitive expedition. When this expedition did arrive with remarkable speed, in February 1897, there was little resistance, but, as one aged chief told me, "The Bini first prayed that the British would not come; then that if they came at all, they would stay". The troops found a city of blood. Benin (City of Strife) had reached its climax of horror. Crucified women hung on the trees, armies of decapitated and butchered slaves lined the narrow roads. Rubbish-pits forty feet deep had been filled with the dead and dying, wells had been choked with dead. Bodies had even been built into living-house walls. In the religious fervour of propitiating the gods, a city had been depleted to a level of hopeless collapse.

Soldiers and sailors set about pillaging the city. Every shrine was swept clear of bronze-work, every wall and floor was probed with musket-butts in search of hidden bronzes. With the departure

of the navy much was shipped to England. The army remained in occupation and more loot, some of it dug up from the present P.W.D. grounds, reached England during the first years of the British occupation.

A few days after occupation the whole palace area, a mile long and half a mile wide, set against the southern wall of the city (and, indeed, some say the entire city) was purged by a devastating fire that burned for some days. Palm-leaf thatch was tinder to its own flying sparks, hard-wood proscenium beams smouldered, burnt and fell treacherously on the brazen and mahogany heads they were designed to protect. In kitchens and private houses timber fell on pots of domestic and ceremonial types, sending them skipping and shattering down steps to the sumps of rooms or into compound yards and wells (Figure 3). Brass tacks melted to pellets, brass sheeting curled and melted to molten puddles. Coconuts and paw-paws burst and baked to crisp globes of pure carbon, resembling some curious charcoal pottery. Over each floor, sump, step and altar lay white ashes, black charcoal and scatterings of white potclay. In the course of years the palaces of earth, unprotected by any roofing, fell and settled on the red clay flooring, covering and sealing the cinders which had been washed into odd corners, eventually providing a new surface.

The Archaeological Problems

How frequent fires must have been in the thatched cities of Africa can be gauged from the remarkable difference in colour between the soil of Benin and the virgin soil outside the city. The former is a red-brown, filled with minute particles of carbon. The latter is a brilliant, clear red, quite unlike any soil I have observed elsewhere.

It was this story, written in earth, clay, pottery and ash, that we sought from December 1954. We found evidence of a series of four such fires. Perhaps many more lie beneath our dig, but the impermeable pattern of clay floors and a prodigal local use of water have so puddled the immediate soil, like a dewpond, that digging of any scientific value could not probe more than five feet below the highest point of the old palace site. At this level my labourers waded in mud, soil became at first unsievable, then impossible to examine. The present city stands upon debris that raises it fifteen feet or more above the level of the surrounding peneplain, yet only a third of this depth can be excavated after the dry season, owing to the artificial hanging water-table maintained by wasted water from stand-pipes—yet I have seen a dry well, fifty yards away, of twenty feet in depth, seemingly supplying a meagre but efficient drainage for the immediate area. This suspended water-table, held up by reticulated clay floors of earlier palace sites is a future problem.

Even if an archaeologist can search five feet of soil, he should be able to deduce what those five feet signify; but the known architecture of steps, altars and sumps cloud the issue. Rubbish pits,

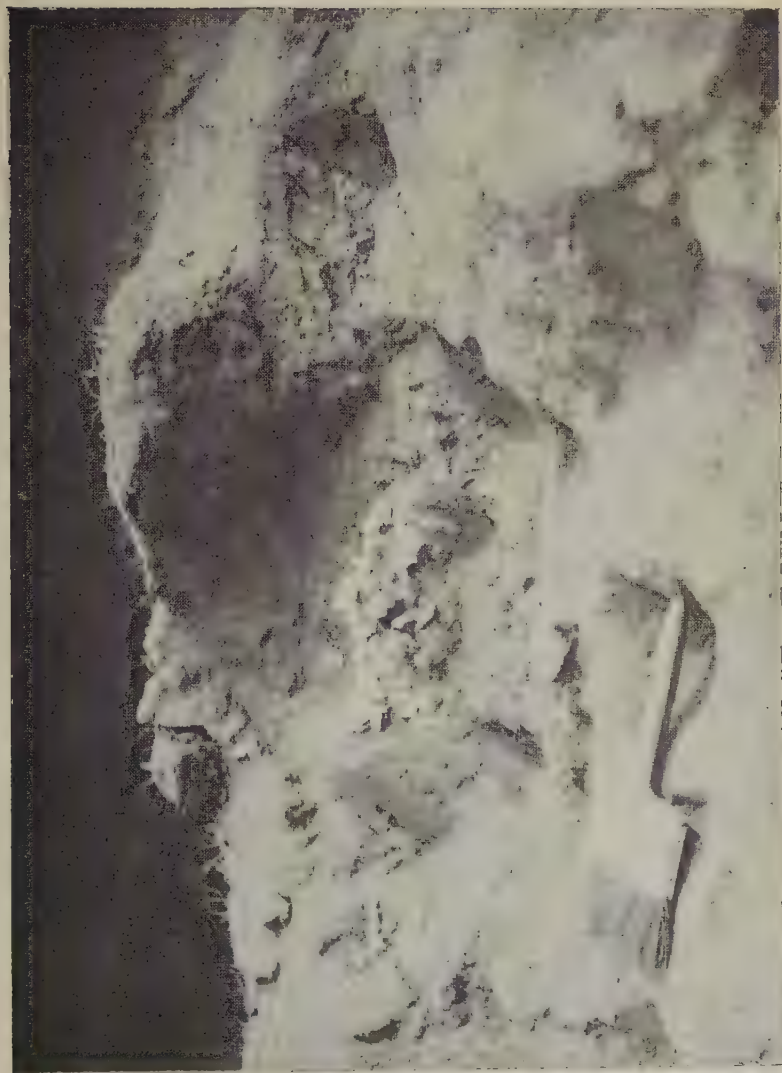


FIG. 1. Excavation of a shrine to Ehi, showing cowry shells

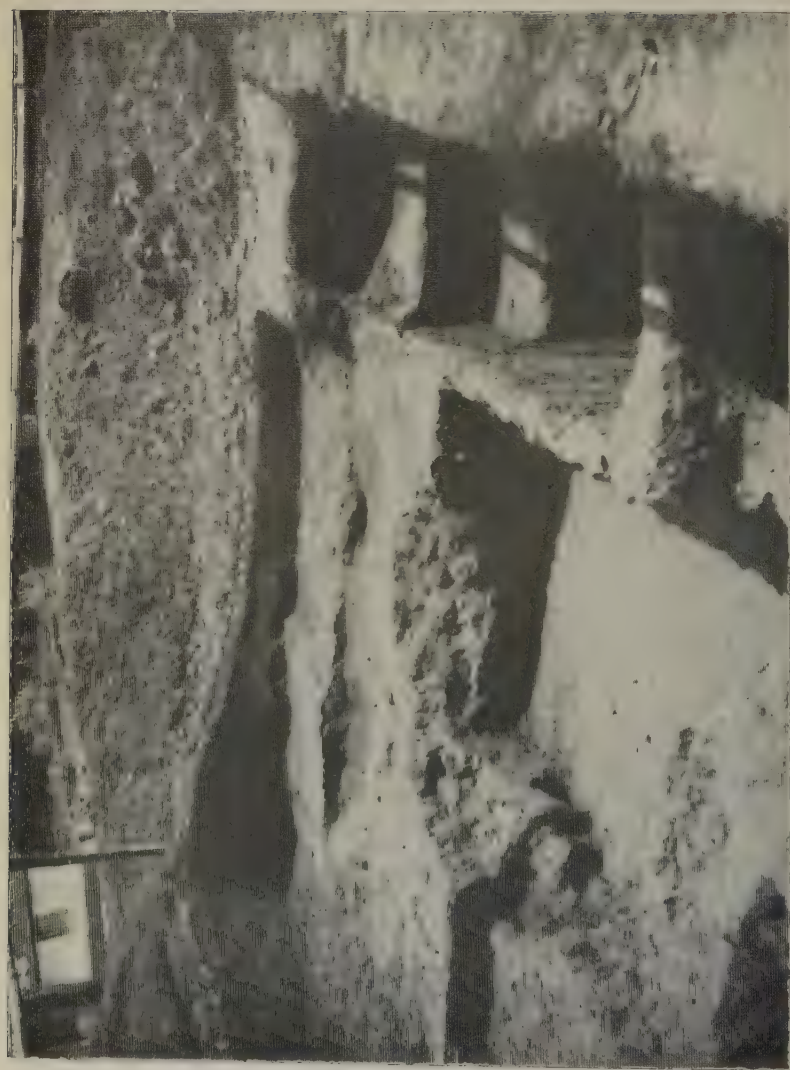


FIG. 2. Tableau of the Gods in the home of Chief R. O. I. Iyamu the Obaihabbon. Figure of Olokun, with two supporters



FIG. 3. Excavation following pot fragments from one step to the next. Note grid letters, O.P.Q.

FIG. 4. Excavation of
a deep rubbish pit
(right)



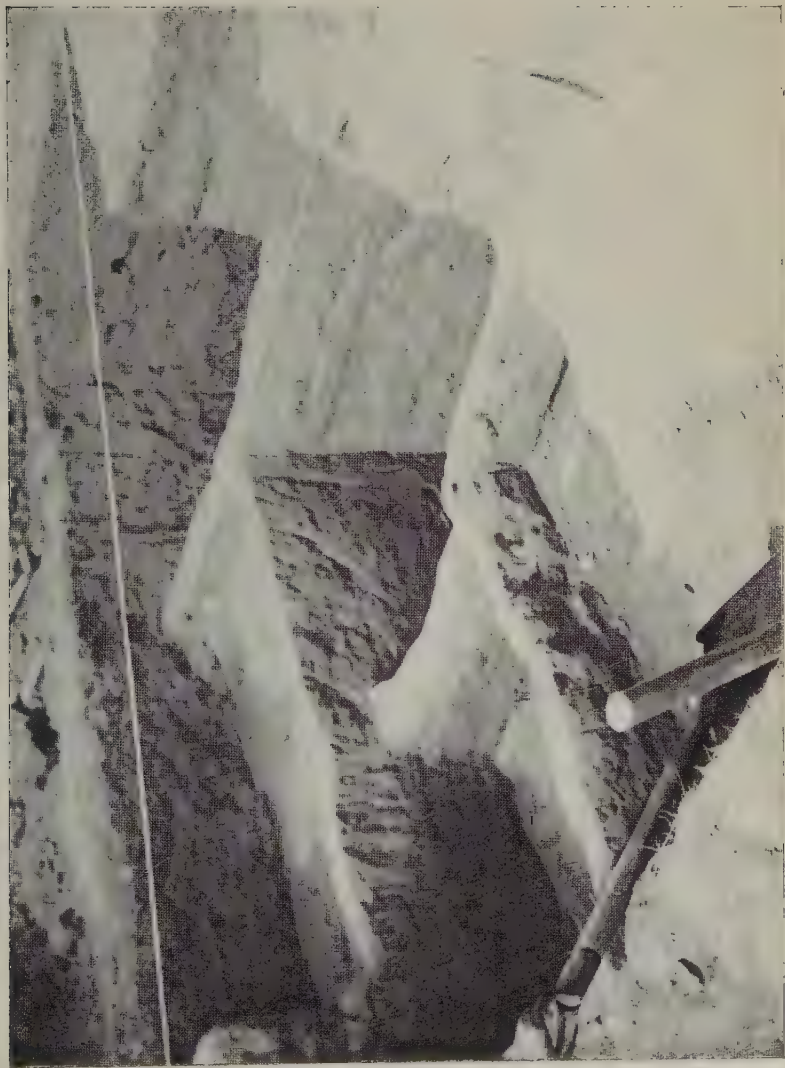


FIG. 5. The box-grid system employed at Benin in an attempt to discover the ground plans of old palace rooms



FIG. 6. The serpent's head found in December 1956
(size given in text)

said to be forty feet deep, have been filled in steeply sloping talus heaps of sherds, vegetables and scrap ivory (Figure 4). These have decayed and fermented finally into vinegar. Ivory has achieved the texture of a hard-boiled egg, quickly hardening and splintering into match-like fragments when released and dried. Brass and bronze becomes a vivid green stain, while pottery crumbles as it is taken from the support of brick-hard tropical soil. Here no bone survives below a foot or so, and sacrifices of seventy years ago are represented by a few plates of tooth-enamel, scaled and still scaling in the acid, avid soil of the land.

We excavated an area lying between one and two hundred yards south-east of the present palace boundary. In the old palace site red clay floors provided evidence of four occupational levels—in one building the floors have been paired by their story. The position of each consecutive wall foundation is recognizable as a trench-like break in the appropriate level of red flooring. The earliest (deepest) pair of floors excavated by us showed a wall-system that by chance coincided with our surface grid to within a few degrees. Our evidence showed a fire after the earliest observable occupation. The fire was followed immediately by a clearance of potsherds and the re-laying of a new clay floor, generally three or four inches thick, over carbon and fine debris that the builders had not worried to clear. Judging from the lack of soil between the first and second floors, the walls had not fallen. The walls were on the same plan exactly, but had been considerably thickened in some instances, suggesting that the walls had not been destroyed, but that the existing house has been rethatched before the annual rains. The intervening layer of charcoal seldom reaches an inch in thickness.

Evidence of Rebuilding

After this second excavated floor the story changes. Another fire can be observed, but this time a foot of wall-debris covers crushed pots and carbon, proving that the walls had been left unthatched above unwanted cracked and shattered potsherds for a long period, and ultimately collapsed. (One or two instances of this may be observed today in other parts of Benin.) As this house certainly stood within the palace grounds, and may have been the home of minor court officials, of slaves or the harem, we may well presume that perhaps the palace itself or some other important building had been destroyed in the same fire, necessitating immediate rebuilding, so that this house was left to collapse and to await its turn.

Following the common custom of raising houses on a platform about two feet high, a complete new house was eventually built over the debris. Quite evidently the layout of older floors, walls and foundations was unknown or ignored. The later pattern of walls, as seen in the trenchlike gaps between adjacent red floors, lies at 45° to the earlier ground plan, thus running diagonally across our grid as well. The new walls were thin—a mere 11 ins. or so, so far

as we could locate them in the sections—possibly hurriedly erected to replace some other house destroyed elsewhere, or in the normal course of palace expansion. A third fire then destroyed this building, but once again (exactly as after the first observed fire) a new building arose from the ashes of the old. Walls again followed the plan of the previous building, which were now thickened to twice their original width. Passages could be plastered only on the outer face, but room walls were thickened on both faces, yielding a roughly Y-shaped section (an old thin wall suddenly widening out into the thicker wall above) at the base. The new floor was again some 4ins. or less above the earlier one, the intervening soil contained no pottery or wall debris, only ash and earth, apparently brought in to level up the floor.

It is certain that this fourth excavated floor represented the building destroyed by the fire of February 21, 1897, again repeating the pattern of bronze pellets, carbonized coconuts and pawpaws, and fallen walls that is so representative of the second fire.

In any laboratory attempts to evolve some pattern of dating (relative, and not by any means absolute) we shall be hampered by various problems. When these earlier fires occurred we do not know: the Carbon-fourteen test could hardly be used to date periods so brief as we must presume these to have been. Perhaps a period of several centuries elapsed between fires in such inflammable buildings, perhaps a few decades cover the whole series.

Difficulties of Stratification.

Taking into consideration the vertical pattern of altars, steps, sumps, the raised platforms on which houses have been built, and the deeply-cut borrow-pits which eventually become rubbish dumps, we shall constantly be baulked in any attempt to elucidate the successive plans of houses set at varying angles to one another, or to deduce the real sequence of pottery from vertical depth. Each traditional house encompasses an over-all height of five or more feet from soil to altar. Falling walls are held at each level by underlying floors, steps, shrines and altars; pots, carved or bronze heads, and offerings tumble to any level. In this chaos earthworms and termites sift and shift their natural foods into smoother patterns, so that (save for the red clay flooring) all recognizable structure is lost.

In 1954 it so happened that we had set our initial test trench partly across a step leading down to a yard from a kitchen, and also across a rubbish-pit. The tangle of sherds, often from the same pot, at a variety of levels, either bowled or immobilized by falling walls, proved most perplexing (Figure 3), though it helped us to guess at the positions of non-surfaced yard steps. Earth from these steps must have eroded to settle at new levels, carrying debris with it.

Puzzling too was the proneness of those who laid later floors to dig up earlier flooring as a source of smooth clay, filling in the hole so dug with sherds and cinders from surface, then laying the new floor above the man-made anachronism as a firm seal. Once clear sections had been cut the story was fairly evident, but only those steps faced with clay can be observed even in a section. As the fine red clay was derived by precipitation from the same Benin soil as the earthen walls, the colours do not contrast sharply in all cases. The recognition is helped, however, by the considerable quantities of finely divided carbon and soot in the soil within the city walls, derived in part from hearth ash, but more copiously from the city holocausts. The fine red clay tends to fade as it dries out and becomes a pinky-brown that is not easy to differentiate. What may at first be diagnosed as a step may later prove to have been the edge of a wall-trench or of a house platform, or the lip of an old borrow-pit of irregular shape filled with rubble.

Pottery

A very considerable quantity of pottery was taken from this part of the excavation and this material is now housed in the Lagos Museum. In general the sherds can be considered as falling into two groups: (a) Eroded sherds of a square inch or so in size which are almost exclusively derived wall material. These must be accepted as such and as belonging to any period prior to the building of the final palace. (b) Fragments of clean-edged pottery often reconstructible into recognizable pot-sections or even whole pots. In this domestic part of the menage these are to be regarded as contemporary wares, used and finally discarded or crushed during the life of the building.

One pot, already reconstructed partially at Lagos, is worth some speculation as it may help to give a clue to the span of group (b) above. Sufficient can be reconstructed to show that the design consists of sprigging in festoons and pendent wreaths. This is certainly an imitation of a European design, without precedent in African art. I can discover no other recent European examples of this combination other than Josiah Wedgwood's Jasper Ware, which he perfected in 1774¹. After the popularity of this series of designs was assured, copies appeared in other wares and in tea-tins, caddies, trays and canisters of light pressed metal. We can with fair certainty date this Benin example as well within the nineteenth century, probably within the first half of the gracious reign of Queen Victoria.

The remainder of our finds all appear to have their form, texture and inspiration based upon local variants of West African tradition. As is to be expected in domestic pottery, the human face and figure are not depicted.

1 See *Concise Encyclopaedia of Antiques*, Connoisseur, London, 1956, vol. II, pp. 132 and 136, s.n., *Sprigging and Jasper Ware*.

Devising Approaches

As in all deposits, recognition of stratigraphy from above is most difficult, and with only two months for work, with labourers who preferred pick and shovel in this brick-hard soil to tedious searching and probing, much was missed in the initial test-trench. Theoretically a 'microtome approach', a vertical section advancing from one face, with a careful and exact charting of every change of soil, each potsherd and brass tack, is the perfect answer. Failing first-class craftsmen and a team of careful excavators, sorters, labellers and packers, we were thrown back on other approaches.

After an initial trench, the first dig was continued as a series of boxes, 2' 6" x 5' 6" separated by a six inch balk in which the surrounding sections could be seen (Figure 5). These eventually had to be broken down in some instances, as we found balks were supported by sherds or pot fragments that had to be followed through to the next box. As we were in a kitchen area the potsherds were numerous and (as it proved) of varying stratigraphic value.

We then perforce tried the approach from above, clearing and cleaning wide areas of floor. This failed as the successive floor areas did not coincide and, when working on the second or fourth floors, we would slip unknowingly on to the first or third floor, which lay immediately below at a very slight depth. Even with these difficulties to overcome we acquired valuable evidence on the succession of floors and the need for a more consistent approach. In the second half of our first dig we reverted to the box-system. This proved less exasperating as we were dealing with living-rooms and had left the pot-strewn kitchen behind us. We filled in the main dig, as we understood we would have to leave Benin owing to difficulties of accommodation.

Once arrangements had been made to stay for a further fortnight we commenced a second test, some little distance away and towards the present palace, using the box-system. In this test a superficial clay floor appeared, with grass growing directly in it, while the preceding floor was well below it. Owing to tree-growth we had no transverse section linking the test with the earlier dig, so that the relationship of the floors in the test to those previously observed could only be presumed. On returning in 1956 I was able to prove that the superficial floor was modern, having recognizably been kept in place by corrugated iron walls, which had been removed later.

We had sought the old bronzes and potsherds of Benin. In this first excavation we found none of the former, as pillage had been efficient, and chance led us to domestic quarters. It is clear that the methodological approach we then evolved may pave the way to future success, even if at first it paid little in dividends. To succeed, future excavators must use either a 'microtome approach' or the box-grid. Any approach from the surface downwards is quite useless.

Second Excavation (1956-57)

My second visit to Benin City began on December 11, 1956 and ended in mid-February. Two of the labourers who had worked with me previously were supplied again, with two skilled well-diggers from Jos, through the kindness of the Jos Museum. Mr. Osula was seconded to me by the Surveyor of Antiquities at Lagos. Additional tools and sieves were loaned to or made for us by the kind co-operation of the Benin P.W.D., and every help was given us by H.H. the Oba of Benin and by the Curator of the Benin Museum, Chief Jacob Egharevba, and his staff.

In addition to excavating at the Palace site it was our intention to attempt by systematic *sondage* (soundings) to find the ancient site of the legendary palace of the Ogiso. The use of well-diggers had proved its value at Ife in 1955 where some hundreds of pits had been made and a fine series of potsherds acquired, capable of yielding a chronological series for Western Nigerian sequence dating.

The point chosen for the new excavation, at the instance of Chief Egharevba, is eighteen yards (16.20m.) west of the final test put down by us in 1955. Our first two pits, six feet (1.90m.) apart were set on a true line continuing the wall forming the southern aspect of the old brick water-tower near the temporary museum. They lie some fifteen yards (14m.) or so from the nearest of the government clerks' offices. Four such soundings were made, forming the corners of a square with 6ft. (1.80m.) sides. The fourth encountered the main water pipe from the water-tower to this section of the city.

We found that the artificial water table was even higher than it had been two years previously. At two feet (60cms.) the ground became wet and difficult to sieve. At 5 feet (1.50m.) it was saturated and unworkable. We sieved all material, but found only a few fragmentary sherds, small and unrelated, consisting only of fragments caught up in wall-building (see above). At a depth of 16ins. (40cms.) and again at 4ft. (1.20m.) we found pavings of red puddled clay, indicating two old floor levels.

The watertable and the disturbance of the soil made in laying the water supply 45 years ago led us to change our approach. We resolved to strip only the upper of the two floors at 16ins. depth. The four pits were joined as a shallow square excavation some eight feet (2.40m.) across. This was stripped in a series of spits to 18ins. (45cms.) but the upper floor was only found along the southern section. The infilling of the waterpipe trench, whose limits were no longer discernible after less than 50 years of weathering, was left as a balk along the northern edge of the dig.

It is clear that the floor visible in the southern section of our dig belonged to a yet-unexcavated room or building. We were now entering an open courtyard, the southern and eastern edges of which we know to have been bounded by rooms at much the same level, both presumably belonging to the 1897 period.

Snake's Head

On the morning of December 20 we came across our first find, close to the waterpipe trench. It consisted of a large shield-shaped, or rather spoon-shaped, slab of cast bronze. Mr. Osula continued the careful excavation and the object proved to be a large reptilian head, measuring $16\frac{1}{2} \times 13$ ins. (41.5×32.5 cms.) across, with a pleasant dark patination. This is to be described elsewhere in detail, but we can repeat the main description briefly here. The head has at some time been crushed, and while the upper surface has been little affected, the jaws are broken off on either side. It ends as a cast selvedge at the neck. The present depth of the cast is some 3 ins. (7.5 cms.). The design is almost symmetrical and the otherwise smooth surface is decorated by a series of plaques, applied in wax by the *cire perdue* process to the original skin of wax.

This head might have been the pair to one illustrated in W.D. Webster's Catalogue (No. 21, figure 135) apart from a few differences in the disposition of the plaques. In both cases the plaque design recalls that frequent on Ashanti gold-dust boxes rather than a Bini design. In the present specimen the eyes are plain but polished bosses, and the incised design suggesting scales along the lip line does not follow the curve of the mouth opening. No nostrils are shown. Both specimens are clearly the product of a single inspiration and perhaps of the same craftsman (Fig. 6). The whole shows a fine artistic simplicity but a high level of craftsmanship. The mouth must have stood open, and legend states that a wind-sensitive tongue wagged between a hundred or so short teeth.

This head had at one time been set over one of the main entrances to the palace, and the lack of sympathy between the artist and the builder can be seen in two gaping holes made to carry the nails or spikes attaching the head to the roof. Above the one hole a triangular scratch made by one of my labourers shows a brassy colour beneath the patina.

At the selvedge forming the back of the casting is a strap of metal (possibly imported brass strip) on the under face, attached by two rivets, one of which was concealed in the design, while the other was almost certainly a small rosette, several of which were found nearby. This strap was clearly meant to attach the body of the snake. Of this no remnant seems to have survived. Few living Bini have seen these serpents *in situ* and all are uncertain as to how the body was built up. One point of agreement is that it was built up in visible sections on some sort of wooden frame. Whether cast bronze sections overlay a structure of wood, or whether a carved representation was plated with imported brass we cannot say. Perhaps further excavation will supply the answer.

Fish Tail

Six inches away from the head and at the same level was found a portion of a plaque (about one-third of the whole) measuring about

6½ x 7ins. (16 x 17.5cms.) of a more cuprous metal. This appears to have formed part of a larger plaque; in fact there is a possibility that it may be the missing portion of the broken plaque shown in Webster's Catalogue, vol. III, part 27, fig. 81. The portion he illustrates measures 7½ x 14¾ins. (19cm. x 36.5cm.), suggesting an overall length of about 21ins. (53cm.). Other illustrations and a good specimen in the Benin Museum show that this plaque is by no means unusual, the only striking feature being that the three elements that compose the tail are of equal size and so finger-like in their appearance that I at first mistook the plaque for a lizard's foot, possibly associable with the reptilian head. This suggestion can be completely and entirely discarded.

Circumstances of Discovery

There are a dozen or so serpent heads known from Benin. Some of these were clearly made in pairs, and the pair to the one found is extant, as suggested above. This will be the only example known in Nigeria, all the rest having left the country, and is housed with other major finds in the Benin Museum.

It is clear that these finds were made in an open space a few feet from the north-facing wall of a building whose floor is now 16ins. below surface at this point. Both specimens are broken and it is clear that the breakage did not occur *in situ*. If it had we would have discovered portions in our dig, whereas the finds were isolated. This strongly suggests that these bronzes were old (perhaps even ancient) when discarded, and have subsequently been covered by the debris of the 1897 palace. This suggestion is borne out by Chief Osuma who was a page at court at the time of the punitive expedition of that year. He informed Dr. R.E. Bradbury that fragments of old, discarded bronzes were used by page boys as duckboards for standing on while washing. So far as his very clear memory serves, he remembers that the sections composing the body and tail of the snakes were of cast bronze, threaded on a wooden framework, and not of thin imported brassplate.

Another question of interest is raised by several early drawings and castings showing the Oba's palace. In almost all of these it is evident that wooden shingles are shown, each alternate one held in place by a stout nail in such a way as to overlap and clamp down its two neighbours. Two such bronzes are illustrated in Ling Roth's book, but he seems to reject their clear evidence and supposes that the Oba's palace was thatched with the usual canna-like leaves. Surviving Bini who remember the palace are uncertain on this point, but the evidence favours the idea that the roof and turret over each main entrance to the palace was so shingled in earlier palaces. The possibility that this was so in 1897 also is strongly suggested by the great numbers of square-cut iron nails, generally 3ins. (7.5cm.) long found in the courtyard, scattered over its surface. These had all

been used and had dropped from burning timbers in the fire. A proportion of these was collected.¹

Further finds

This yard was excavated further over a wide area, and over the whole surface small fragments of imported rolled brass plate, bronze or brass rivets, some with rosette heads, beads and other discarded and lost fragments, had been trodden into the muddy surface. The position of the yard floor was clearly marked by a good scattering of pot-clay (an impure kaolin known locally as 'chalk') which had been distributed over the whole area. The disappearance of the clay towards the eastern end of our excavation marked the outside wall of a building. A foot further in the typical red flooring of a room was encountered. This eventually proved to be the western end of the same room we had encountered in the final test trench of the previous dig. The courtyard lay between this and the room encountered earlier (see above).

Against this wall and in the yard we found evidence of an altar, to Ogun, god of iron. This find was 18 feet (5.4m.) north-east of the snake's head. Lying on what had clearly been a raised surface was an iron blade, an *ada* or small scimitar, which had presumably had a wooden handle, long assimilated by termites. Next to this lay a bronze-handled iron dagger (*adebo*)², the pommel, the size of the first joint of a thumb, had been gracefully modelled into the form of a leopard head with canine teeth recurved like a boar's tusks. The spots were indicated typically by small ring-markings. The grip of the handle consisted of a series of annular ridges. Lying beneath this was an *ava* or Ogun's hammer, L-shaped and very similar to the smith's hammers made in Benin today.

Excavation of large room

Work was now continued eastward to clear the floor of the large room as far as our test dig of 1955. Little was found. Apart from iron nails, innumerable copper staples and cut tacks of brass, all of which appear to have been imported, there is little of real interest. A few strips of rolled and imported brass show designs. One fairly lengthy strip showed a repeat festoon, the loops incised and feathered, hanging from a cluster of three circles. This too may well have been an imported design, whether made overseas or copied locally.

1. Dr. R. E. Bradbury informs me that it is well known in Benin that shingles made from iroko were formerly used for roofing the palace but in 1897 parts of the roof were already covered with corrugated iron sheet. EDITOR.
2. Dr. R. E. Bradbury informs me that the composition of this word is:—*Ada*—*ebo*. *Ebo* is the general word for spirit or deity. *Adebo* are carried by priests or their attendants on ceremonial occasions. EDITOR.

Quite consistently, small eroded fragments of pottery occur, without one single specimen of broken or crushed pot. Comparing this with old walls it becomes clear that we are dealing with sherds caught up in the clay used again and again for wall material. This material (though collected) can hardly be used for dating, except in the sense that only existing sherds would be caught up in each successive wall (*terminus ante quem*).

One single pot, of a very common domestic type, was found near the centre of the hall or room, indicating that this was hardly a domestic section of the palace, but rather in the nature of a reception room, free of ornaments, except perhaps wooden objects.

Mine detector

Mr. B. E. B. Fagg brought down a mine-detector from the Jos Museum. This was very satisfactorily made usable through the help of the department of Posts and Telegraphs (Marconi Section), and was employed by us with technical success. As repaired and tuned the range was limited to a depth of 4ins. (10cm.) but a more delicate tuning should permit recognition of metal objects at a foot (30cm.) below surface. All surfaces were gone over before excavating a new 'spit'. Indications frequently revealed metal, but in every instance this proved to be small—a nail or scrap of brass. This, however, is merely the 'luck of the draw'. If anything of any size had been present it would certainly have reacted appropriately. The idea is certainly an extremely useful one. The 'paving' of the whole room area with the detector slowed down the work somewhat, and proved of no great value in this instance, but it would help immeasurably in retrieving large bronzes in an unscratched condition.

The method used was as follows : The site was 'paved' with the paver-face immediately above surface, in strips 5-6ins. (12-15cm.) apart, *boustrophedon* or back and forth in a plough-like action. As a spot reacted it was gone over carefully to check the area of reaction, a match stick was left as marker. This area was then carefully dug, generally with bamboo slivers, until the metal was found. Only small metal objects were in fact located, but subsequent excavation to 4ins. (10cm.) depth showed that only minute fragments of metal, such as small cut-tacks of brass, were missed. If any large objects had been present they would have shown a marked and widespread reaction.

I am of opinion that the use of a mine-detector is justified, even if only as a precaution against the scratching or even destruction of bronzes of considerable artistic merit and value.

General Summary

Beneath the very recent surface floor, bounded here and there by the typical scalloping of a corrugated iron shed, lies a layer of blackish oxidized earth probably largely a recent humus, varying in depth from 2 to 9ins. (5-25cm.). This seems to have accumulated or oxidized *in situ* above the material of fallen walls.

This wall deposit is recognizable only from its content of minute charcoal fragments from burnt thatch etc. that make the normally bright red Benin soil a dark brown here; with this soot are included slightly eroded pot fragments which were an intrinsic part of the wall fabric. It more or less covers both (a) the courtyard surface on which all the metal objects were found, marked by a scatter of 'chalk' (potclay) and bounded by the walls of two rooms, one to the south, one to the east, and (b) the red clay floor of the large reception room to the east. The clay composing the floors is fresh and red, quite free of included fragments of soot and charcoal, though a deposit of this lies over the upper surfaces. Both floors are at the same level and belong to the 1897 palace.

Underlying floors located in our final test of April 1955 and confirmed by the initial pits dug in December 1956, are necessarily prior to 1897 and represent victims of earlier fires. There is no reasonable method of dating these except as a sequence.

In sharp contrast to the 1955 excavation in a domestic part of the palace where pottery was abundant, the present dig only gave us one recent pot and a number of eroded sherds from wall material.

Ugbeku

Exactly three miles from the old Fort (the old Post Office and Resident Officer's buildings) on the Sapoba Road stands a board erected at the suggestion of Chief Jacob U. Egharevba to indicate the traditional site of Ugbeku, the town of Igodomigodo, which eventually moved to Benin under the Ogiso. As the area is linked with local legends it was suggested that future excavations might well be made here with a view to getting a carbon date, associable with a pottery sequence.

On approaching H. H. the Oba of Benin to discuss the possibility of excavating on the site, he stated that this was not the Ugbeku palace, but an ancient site to which the widows of the Oba (apart from the highly important Queen Mother who will govern a suburb of Benin) were always relegated to keep them out of possible political intrigue. There is no reason to doubt that both legends may be correct, the site of the old city might well have provided the excuse for the housing of a purdah of widows.

The point where the board is erected suggests some sort of earth-work, whose function is at present difficult to determine. It is possibly a 'hollow-way' (see below), either a waterpath or a road towards the Niger delta. In Chief Egharevba's opinion it is a small moat flattened by time to a shallow trench. It is not suggestive of a palace or village site in my opinion.

Difficulties of transport and the variety of alternative work that needs doing meant that this site has been left for future excavation.

Palace of the Ogiso Ere

Chief Egharevba took us to another legendary site, that of the palace of Ogiso, the focus of the old town of Benin after the move

from Ugbeku. Here again he has had a board erected, and here again legends clash. The board stands at the north-western end of a considerable area, perhaps more than a mile in length, which various traditions associate with the first palace of Ogiso Ere. Chief Egharevba regards the Western Boys' High School as the focus of the original site; H. H. the Oba of Benin says that the true site lies within the area between the electrical power station, the new cemetery and three shrines set a few hundred feet apart, one being the shrine of Nohemwauvben.

The ground near the School is very broken. Much of the area has recently been cleared of rubber trees, and it is difficult to be sure that the planting and felling have not masked ancient earthworks or merely simulated them. At about 150 yards south of the school a wide depression runs East and West, with bamboo growing on each side at irregular intervals. To the west this channel turns North-west, then North, to cross Western Boys' High School Street at right angles, as a mound or rampart some eight feet high. In Chief Egharevba's opinion this was the ditch about the palace, but if so the wall was on the wrong side of the moat as the northern lip is higher than the southern.

Towards the east this ditch merges into a series of terraces, forming the lip of the escarpment to the Ikpoba River in a steep descent. The steps or terraces are either the natural terraces cut by that stream or are more likely to have been the result of slumping in sheet erosion as forest has been cleared.

While wells were being dug, a careful search was made of over 20 borrow-pits, each associated with recent building operations, of the surface of cassava fields in the ditch, road cuttings, the edges of the terraces and in excavations in the High School grounds. An area of over half a square mile was sampled. Apart from a dozen fragments of freshly broken potsherds on or near the present surface there is no pottery whatsoever in the soil. This is surprising, as potsherds occur everywhere in all recent Nigerian cities, with a wide and consistent scatter, more especially as sherds are incorporated in walls and redistributed as the buildings collapse. Here, however, the Benin soil is perfectly homogeneous, quite unconsolidated and free of charcoal fragments or any solid objects. The sand is bright red, loamy to the touch and is clearly virgin soil.

Pit. I. This was dug to a depth of 12 feet (3.60m) in the centre of the ditch at a point directly opposite to and due south of the High School buildings. The soil was homogeneous throughout, free of all carbon or sherds.

Pit. II. Dug to a depth of 10ft. 6ins. (3.15 m) one hundred feet (30m) north by west of Pit I. Result again negative.

Pit. III. Dug at a point lying on the same line and directly opposite the centre of the High School and 110 feet (33m) from the fence in the east-ward slope of a slight hillock. At 5 feet (1.5m) the colour of the soil changed appreciably to a grey-red. A few inches below this a quantity of charcoal, including burnt oil-palm seeds, was

collected in case the Survey of Antiquities regards a carbon-test as worth while. Heavy, coarse sherds were collected. At 5ft. 6ins. (1.65m) the red virgin soil continued. At 8 feet (2.4m) work stopped.

Pit IV. Four yards (3.6 m) to the west of pit III an attempt was made to intercept the charcoal deposit again without success. Virgin soil to 8ft. 6ins. (2.55m).

Pit V. Halfway between pits III and IV, with the same negative result.

We burrowed into the side of pit III and found the charcoal consisted of a thin 'vein' running southwest, but quickly thinning out. The pits were filled in.

I am under the impression that no houses had been built in the area between the Western Boys' High School and the shallow ditch at any time. The charcoal may have been left by palm-seed collectors or may possibly mark the site of an isolated bush-hut. This completely negatives this area as the site of a palace, however small the early settlement may have been. It is also clear that the so-called moat was in fact a water-path, a hollow-way to the Ikpoba River, which links with the eastern end of Western Boys' High School Street two hundred yards or so east of pit I. If further work is carried on here it would be advisable to put down *sondages* north-east of pit III to discover the upper extent of the charcoal patch which slopes slightly towards the south-west.

Further Excavations

A move was made one mile to the south-east to a rubber plantation. Pit VI was put down 50 yards (45m) north of a small bush shrine beneath a cotton-silk tree which stands 150 yards west of Oza Street. Nothing was recovered. Virgin soil to 10 feet (3m).

Pit VII three yards (2.7m) from the sacred Ikhimwi tree outside the shrine. Virgin soil to 10 feet.

The disturbance of the surface soil here is due to the destruction of bush and the planting of a rubber plantation. The deep trenches are certainly saw-pits used in logging the trees.

Waterpaths

Early writers, especially in accounts of the 1897 punitive expedition, refer to precipitously-sided waterpaths along which the city had to be approached. Two such hollow-ways, leading from the new cemetery off the East Circular Road to the river, appear to converge slightly and probably join up further down the slope. One lies fifty yards west of pits VI and VII, the other about the same distance further west. The modern waterpath is on the surface, only cut a few inches deep, a few yards from pit VI.

These waterpaths are hollowed out by use, perhaps partly scoured by rains, but kept clear of bush and trees, as the very slight accumulation of earth on either side suggests. These heaps are more likely to have been accumulated humus from cleared bush than earth dug

out of the path. They would have served also to protect the pathway from lateral erosion and flooding in wet weather. The water-paths are some 10 to 12ft. deep, somewhat wider at the surface, and the path would have been 2 or 3 feet wide (60-90cms), of the type usual in Africa where water-carriers walk in single file.

Final Tests

Half a mile south-east of the cemetery three pits were sunk. While this is outside the legendary site of the Ogiso palace area, a local resident said he had dug up cannon balls here. Hoping to find an arsenal—with perhaps brass cannon—we put down tests. All were negative. As the site has been masked by a rubber plantation and by recent buildings, our informant could no longer locate the exact position of his finds, but only a general area.

I would like to express my thanks to the Survey of Antiquities, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, H. H. the Oba of Benin, Chief Jacob U. Egharevba, Dr. and Mrs. R. E. Bradbury, and to all those officials, chiefs, school-masters and others who made my visits to Benin so consistently pleasant and fruitful.

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VON UECHTRITZ'S EXPEDITION TO ADAMAWA, 1893

by

A. H. M. KIRK-GREENE

THE CONFERENCE OF BERLIN of 1885 focused attention on the principle that European powers could claim rights in Africa on the basis of effective authority and the next decade witnessed what the *Times* described as the "race for the Tschad". This contest focussed on Yola, the capital of the original Fulani sultanate of Adamawa and the gateway to the so far unoccupied area round Lake Chad. It was believed that the River Benue, navigable as far as Yola and Garua, might afford a direct waterway to Lake Chad by way of the Mayo Kebbi, the Tuburi marshes, the Logone and the Shari, the last two rivers draining into Lake Chad itself. The British gained a start on the other European nations that were casting envious glances towards the Northern Cameroons when they succeeded in opening trade in Yola. In 1883 Mr. (later knighted under Government) Wallace had obtained from Lamido Sanda the lease of a plot of land on which to erect a trading-station, but when Mr. Dangerfield reached Yola with the building materials for the factory the Lamido informed the National African Company that he had decided to rescind his permission to trade in the town and would now restrict the Company's activities to trading from a steamer. At last, in 1885, the Company started trade at Yola from its hulk *Emily Waters*. This was admittedly a lead over the other interested nations; but the history of the National African Company, known as the Royal Niger Company after it received its charter in 1886, and its anxious relationship with Lamido Sanda and his fanatical successor, Zubeiru, makes it clear that the English footing in Yola was but a precarious one. Meanwhile there were French expeditions to the Adamawa hinterland, notably those of Le Maistre, Clozel and the celebrated adventurer Mizon, and there were German travellers like Flegel, Zintgraff, Morgen and Stetten exploring the Fumbina kingdom, as Barth had termed Adamawa.

In 1893 the German Colonial Society in Berlin equipped a private expedition under Herr von Uechtritz and despatched it to the Northern Cameroons with the aim of acquiring large areas of the hinterland that might otherwise be lost to the French and English. An eminent historian on the Cameroons, Professor H. Rudin, has suggested that the English were quite ready to aid anybody in a position to thwart French activity in the area of the Niger and the Benue, for the intrigues of Lieutenant Mizon had been a sharp thorn in the flesh of the Royal Niger Company. At any rate, the Company readily undertook to transport the expedition as far as Yola free of charge, with the provision that beyond Yola the Germans were not

to engage in trade, nor establish any factories beyond the confluence of the Mayo Kebbi and Benue, nor to conclude treaties with local chieftains in the area north of Yola. Attached to this expedition as Medical Officer was Siegfried Passarge.

Of the handful of European visitors to Yola before the turn of the century, Dr. Passarge alone approaches the scholarship of Heinrich Barth by the solid, Teutonic thoroughness of his book *Adamaua* (Berlin, 1895). The only account in English of this expedition is a paper read by Dr. Passarge to the Berlin Geographical Society on July 7th 1894, reproduced in the *Geographical Journal* of January, 1895. This is, however, a very abbreviated résumé of the original volume of 550 pages and 300 illustrations, the second half of which consists of a detailed analysis of the geological, linguistic, domestic, economic, social, etc. aspects of the Fulani empire in Adamawa; indeed, the chapters on Yola, so vital to those interested in the history of the Adamawa Emirate, are dismissed in the sentence, "The expedition reached Yola with 70 porters on August 31st, 1893, having left Berlin in June. From Garua an advance was made to Bubanjidda." Since the Secretariat Library at Lagos has, according to the bibliography given in the *Nigeria Handbook* (1953), only the German edition of Passarge's book, and reference to the British Museum shows no record of any English translation ever having been made, this translation and synopsis of the Yola narrative are offered in the hope that they may be of help to those interested in the history of European contact with pre-1900 Adamawa.

At Lokoja, Mr. Wallace, of the Royal Niger Company, had collected porters for the expedition, among whom was Audu, who had been interpreter to Mr. C. Macintosh, the Senior Executive Officer of the Benue region whom legend credits with having worn a suit of chain armour and gloried in the nickname of "King Charlie." They were to be paid 30/- a month in kind, which was considered a lot for up-country but was agreed on so as not to differentiate between the carriers engaged at Lagos and these additional men taken on at Lokoja. Most of the porters used their first wages to pay off debts in the town, but the crafty old hands bought articles that could be bartered on the forthcoming Benue journey and thus secured a handsome profit.

They sailed on the afternoon of August 16th in the Royal Niger Company's steamer *Croft*. Snags were frequent in the river as they approached Ibi, the headquarters of the Benue area of the Company. The native town had a wall and moat, "inhabited mostly by Djikum, whose king at Wukari acknowledges the suzerainty of the Sultan of Muri." The Commandant, Mr. Spinks, was ill, but Dr. Passarge

was able to comfort him with some wine and brandy. Here they bought all the gauze they could to have made into mosquito nets, for in the last four nights on the river they had been so viciously bitten that hardly a soul had slept. Those made for them in Berlin had, with many cases of clothing, been despatched in error to Usambara in East Africa! They left Ibi on the 22nd accompanied by a young Agent called Jones who was going to take over the hulk at Yola. Just after they had called at one of the Company's regular wooding-stations they passed the *Nupe*, on board which were the General-Agent, Mr. Wallace, and Rittmeister von Stetten. The latter had reached Yola in July with his expedition, but was now on his way home after being wounded in a fight with the Bakoko; he had left the expedition at Yola under Hauptmann Haering. Lieutenant Mizon was said to be still at Yola, but his two stations on the Benue had just been closed down by Wallace.

At 10 a.m. on August 24th they reached the first French station, Manarawa. Only the previous day had the tricouleur fluttered over the mud warehouse, but now the flagpole was bare. Mr. Jones confiscated the key of the store, which was full of rubber, and the French Agent, Herr Huntz buckel from Alsace, was instructed to accompany them to Yola....he was at once christened "Mr. Dogtail" by the Englishman. On the following day they tied up at Kwinini, the second French station, which they found already largely under water. On the bank the Agent gesticulated wildly in his resolve not to accompany them to Yola but to hold on to his post till the last. But he, too, was taken aboard, together with a cargo of chickens, mutton and a huge pot of guinea-corn beer. Passarge remarks on the abundance of fish in the Benue and recounts "Mr. Dogtail's" story of the *fahak* fish which so inflates when tickled that children play with it like a rubber-ball until it bursts. That evening they reached Djen, at the foot of the Tangale range. The inhabitants swarmed forth in their canoes and started a lively trade in hens and goats in exchange for salt, small mirrors and beads.

The following day took them through what Passarge described as the finest stretch of the Benue valley between Ibi and Yola. "To the north, the wild, weird, tooth-ridged Tangale range, with another series of mountains beyond, while to the south loomed the giant Fumbina mountains ending in a number of splendid sandstone table mountains. Some bare hilltops covered only with grass, Mount Gabriel and Mount Elizabeth may well be formed of basalt, to judge by the dark boulders that strew their slopes, and which, by their shape, may perhaps be of volcanic origin. But not merely geologically, also ethnographically, is this part of the Benue valley extremely interesting, particularly as the abode of completely independent, powerful pagan tribes. They occupy not only the hills, like the famous cannibals of the Tangale and Piri tribes, but also live close by the river, like the Bassama and Bula... The latter are an exceptionally martial people. Thanks to the dense population and the marshy country in which they live, they have so far been able to

resist all attacks by the Fulani. This circumstance is of great importance in that it is through their territory that the only direct route lies between Adamawa and the Hausa states of Kano, Zaria, Bauchi and Muri. During Vogel's visit in 1855 they threw back the army of the Emir of Yola with severe losses to him. The route between Muri and Yola was closed, and a caravan for Sokoto that wanted to force its way through was annihilated, with only two survivors. Flegel complained of their hostile attitude in 1879, and feuds with Europeans are continually occurring. In 1886 several villages in this region were shelled by the *Kuka* because of their repeated robberies. In 1891 the Bassama destroyed the English factory at Wumun, as a punishment for which the village was razed to the ground. Again in the winter of 1893/94 they attacked one of the Company's boats that was on its way to Ibi but were driven off when fire was opened on them."

They found the snags in the river and the swift current too much for them. For three days they were held up by these, while the Bassama and Bula canoemen from the villages either side of Numan brought in supplies. On the 29th they anchored opposite Wright mountain but on the following morning they ran aground just beyond the destroyed village of Numan. From here they could discern the Bagale mountains in the distance. They managed to withdraw from this false channel on the next day and entered a deeper one. "Soon the sandstone Bagale Hill was close on our left, ahead of us beckoned our goal, the English hulk *Africa*." They anchored beside her on August 31st.

They rowed over to greet the Agent, Mr. Bradshaw, who despatched a messenger—none other than Flegel's companion, Madugu Gashin Baki, who had been presented to Kaiser Wilhelm in Berlin—to Yola to inform the Minister of their arrival and to request permission for the party to go ashore. Meanwhile a note was received from Hauptmann Haering apologising that fever prevented him from personally welcoming Uechtritz to Yola. Since this party was accommodated in a village only half an hour away, Uechtritz and Passarge decided to call at once.

"Mr. Dogtail" betook himself to the French ships of Mizon's expedition, anchored on the left bank, while Bradshaw lent the Germans his rowing-boat to take them across to the landing place on the same bank. "The path led steeply between sandstone rocks up to the forty metre high hill that formed the bank. On top a grassy plateau unfolded, on which lay Kassa, the sojourning-place of the German expedition." With the two Europeans, who had abandoned their hot tents in favour of cool, thatched mud huts, they opened a bottle of cognac to celebrate this unexpected meeting of two German expeditions in darkest Africa.

Political relationships were uneasy at the time of their arrival, for the Royal Niger Company was striving to retain its Adamawa monopoly while two German expeditions and a French one wooed

the Emir with presents and promises. Uechtritz, observing the conditions imposed on him by the Company, informed the Emir that his party did not intend to sojourn in Yola nor did it seek to trade there; they merely sought his permission to travel through his sultanate.

They were bidden to present themselves at Yola on the following day. The mishap over the despatch of some of their loads to East Africa occasioned them considerable difficulty in preparing themselves for the audience, but towards ten o'clock they were sufficiently smartly dressed to set off with Mr. Bradshaw by boat to the native town of Yola. "The way led past the French ships into the most southernly of the three arms into which the river divides above the sandstone ridge of Kassa; thence, between grasses and acacias over a flooded area, heading to the south. To our right was the Kassa hill, from which we had yesterday evening enjoyed the superb view across the Benue valley. After a journey of an hour the landing place was reached. It was another twenty minutes to the town. The path was very muddy and often we had to be carried across puddles. With the firm, rocky ground we also reached Yola, which is built on a level sandstone ridge. It has between twelve and fifteen thousand inhabitants and gives a friendly impression. From a distance you imagine there is only a forest there, on the edge of which a few houses peep forth; but when you get nearer, a colourful picture unfolds. The fresh, dark green of the trees surrounding the farms contrasts sharply with the vivid red of the earth and the mud huts, and with the blue of the sky; even the monotonous grey of the *zana* mats and thatch roofs on which creepers climb, does not appear in the least unpleasant. But in truly surprising harmony does the dark brown skin of the inhabitants tone with the gentle and vivid colours of the landscape. And what an unfathomable feeling for beauty and colour awareness is revealed by the choice of white, blue and red materials in their dress!"

"We had to wait some time outside the *zaure* (reception-hut) of the Minister, Akal. Akal is properly speaking the Minister of War, but in practice he is the right-hand man of the Sultan, and as such is responsible for all political business. Like most officials in the royal courts of the Sudan, he is nothing more than a slave of the Sultan, who can be dismissed without ado if he displeases his master or becomes too powerful. Generally, only slaves, and not the aristocracy, are admitted to high office, for the latter might prove dangerous to an absolute ruler."

The interview began "with *lafias* and *ssanus* and clapping of the hands." The native clerk from the hulk interpreted the gist of Akal's histrionic oratory: no permission to travel through Adamawa unless presents were first offered to the Emir. After much fruitless argument, Akal rose and conducted the Europeans along a winding, *zana*-fenced path to the Palace, to enquire whether the Emir would receive them. They waited in a large *zaure* while his Majesty finished his noonday prayers in the mosque. As the imam's cries

of "*Allah Akhobar*" sounded in the distance, marking the end of the prayers, Akal returned with the reply that the Sultan required gifts before he would grant them an interview and a safe conduct through his kingdom. They were thus obliged to return to the ship, little edified by their first encounter with African diplomacy; and the rest of the afternoon they spent on board in preparing presents for the Emir and his influential minister.

The next morning a message was delivered: Uechtritz's party might land if Stetten's expedition embarked. Mr. Bradshaw pointed out that this was impossible as there was not enough room on board for so many men: in any case, he added, Mr. Wallace himself would shortly be visiting Yola.

"This last remark was a mild threat, for even Akal appeared to be somewhat afraid of Wallace." That evening a second message was brought, giving permission to land. At sunset, Wallace arrived on board the *Nupe*.

The next two days were devoted to the removal of loads and men to Kassa. Tents were pitched on the site of Stetten's camp, as Haering and his party were due to embark on the *Kuka*, en route for home, on September 4th. They had originally camped in Yola, but in order to avoid being molested by the locals they had withdrawn to the village of Kassa.

That afternoon a tornado, "blowing up from the north-east like most of Adamawa's storms", cooled the atmosphere. Afterwards, Passarge went for a walk through Kassa, passing the market, situated under a baobab tree, and following a path to the south which led through tall corn fields to another giant baobab, from where there was a fine view of the green forest in which Yola lay.

On September 7th, Mr. Wallace offered to take Uechtritz down to Yola with him for an audience with the Emir, but as he was still suffering from fever Passarge went instead. "At midday I took the shortest route to Yola, down the Kassa ridge and crossing the plain between it and the town. In the dry season this can be done on foot, but it was now flooded and I crossed in one of the Company's boats that was waiting for me. On the other side a horse was ready for me, with an Arab saddle and bridle, and thus I rode into Yola, while a man with a white turban, blue gown and long sword, walked dignifiedly ahead of me. In the house to which he led me I found Mr. Wallace and Lieutenant Carr already assembled, together with a stately Fulani in rich clothing, who had an alert and interesting face. This was an emissary from the Sultan of Sokoto, sent for at the instigation of the Company to compel the Emir to banish Mizon from Adamawa. Hardly had he heard that I was a fellow-countryman of Abdurrahman (Flegel) than he offered his hand, saying that he was a friend of this man, and produced from the pocket of his robe an ivory-handled revolver, a present from his old friend, whose death he mourned."

"The ambassador was first summoned to the Emir; after a half hour the three of us followed. We entered a large, round hut, which

differed in no way from the usual huts save in its size. By the entrance opposite sat the Emir on his mat. The mouth-veil of his dark blue turban concealed only slightly the energetic, striking features of this despot, so feared by his people on account of his severity and violence. His clothing, a white gown and red trousers, were just the same as the normal garments of the rich Yola people. Opposite him knelt Akal. A wooden trestle, on which lay a suit of ancient padded armour, together with two French cannons and their ammunition cases, made up the furniture."

"We Europeans sat down on the ground. After countless *ssanu, barka, ussako*, the conversation turned on Mizon and his expulsion. Suddenly Mizon himself entered, with a white Arab and a negro. Now began a vivid argument, interesting not only because of its subject matter, but also by reason of its participants and the many languages in which it was conducted. Mr. Wallace spoke to his clerk in English, the clerk translated to Madugu in Hausa, and Madugu repeated it in Fulfulde to the Sultan. The latter replied to Mizon's second companion, a shereef, in Fulfulde. The shereef translated into Arabic and the Arab turned it into French. The Englishmen asked the Emir whether he had concluded protective treaties with Mizon, whether he had bought or had been given the weapons, and when Mizon would be leaving Yola. The interview revolved round these questions, and at all points fell against Mizon's favour. The debate continued for a long time and was heated. In his excitement the Emir forgot all about etiquette and addressed the English clerk direct. With the decree that Mizon would have to leave Yola the argument closed. There followed a short greeting on my part. The Emir answered that he was expecting in the next few days the leader of the expedition in person with the presents, as soon as he should have recovered. With this the audience was concluded and the fate of Mizon and his expedition sealed."

On September 11th Uechtritz was summoned to Yola for an audience. With him he took the presents for the Emir: a length of gold brocade, half a dozen pieces of white brocade, a dozen blue, white and other coloured lengths of cloth, red flannel and white turban material, two gold-embroidered burnouses, a sword, a prayer mat, white and coloured blankets, opera glasses, fezzes, razors, agate rings, coral necklaces, scents, needles, crochet thread, and a pair of saddle-holsters. The Minister, who received the same sort of gifts but of less value, accepted them without demur. But the Emir was holding court, after which he took his meal and followed it with a siesta, so that Uechtritz was kept waiting. The audience, when granted, was brief: the Emir said he would make a return present of horses, and Akal promised five donkeys.

The next day four men appeared, leading an old, chestnut jade whose saddle-sores made him quite unrideable. The envoys described it as a forerunner of the Emir's presents, and mentioned that another two horses were on the way. The following morning another four slaves, eager for their 'dash' brought a white burnous

and returned the pistol-holsters with the pointed remark that the Emir could not use them as he had no pistols. To this gibe Uechtritz retorted that he, too, had none, but he had thought that the Emir was a rich enough man to have bought such an article from the hulk; in any case, he could not accept the return of a gift. A further embassy arrived on the following day with a fine, five-year old bay, saying that the Emir would like another rich gown and would send another horse and three donkeys. Uechtritz intended personally to deliver a roll of white brocade and a silver necklace, but on the way he met Akal, who took delivery of these presents.

While waiting for the Emir's promised gifts they were able to explore Kassa and its neighbourhood. "It was like a holiday resort rather than an African outstation, the time that we spent in Kassa." With the Emir matters promised favourably, and the village-head, the Galadima of Kassa, had yielded to a gift and had taken all the men under his care in the village. Chicken and rice with sweet potatoes were the principal items on the menu; now and then a lamb was killed; shooting brought pigeon and guinea-fowl into the bag; eggs, milk and honey were occasionally obtained. They used up a lot of their tinned provisions, vegetables, sardines, etc., together with their small supply of wine, in order to lighten the loads. They missed most of all bread, and found the millet-cakes made by their cook an unsatisfactory substitute.

"The village of Kassa, which was our abode for a month, lies on a sandstone plateau forty metres above the river. It rises steeply from the Benue valley in the east, north and west, but to the south it slopes gradually away. Several shallow depressions in the valley bring an undulating variety into this gentle slope. Nothing catches the eye, on first coming across this landscape, as much as the bizarre formation of this grey, sandstone rock, so weatherbeaten and pock-marked. The further you go from the edge of the plateau, the richer becomes the vegetation on the ground and the more the rocks crumble away into a red, sandy loam or a loamy sand, known as laterite. The slope of the hill is dotted with innumerable farms and settlements. The actual village of Kassa, the largest hamlet situated on the eastern slope, consists of some twenty to twenty-five compounds, huddled close to each other leaving a narrow path between the *zana* mats. Most of them are grouped round a tall baobab, under whose broad shade a market is held."

An account of the crops and flora round Kassa follows. Passarge notes how greatly the Fulani had intermixed with the negroid peoples, and goes on to describe their physical and ornamental features. He draws a detailed picture of a typical compound, belonging to one of the villagers with whom he made friends and "on whose face there shone an ethereal serenity as if Allah had granted him the highest boon by allowing him to gaze on us". The womenfolk of the household were perturbed at his intimate domestic questions and notetaking, but a gift of small mirrors allayed their fears of witchcraft. Sitting outside his tent, Passarge used to chat with a host of

different passers-by, for during the rains the main path from Yola to the hulk led through Kassa. Often pagans from the more distant villages came along, and "if they had interesting, artistic faces, they would receive a small present in the hope that they would allow themselves to be photographed. Avarice in many conquered their fear of the mysterious manipulation, which they regarded as juju".

When the moon was in its first quarter, a grand concert and dance took place each night in the village, described in detail by the writer.

As soon as the Emir's first gift-horses arrived, Passarge was able to explore further afield, so that he embarks upon a lengthy description of the flora and fauna of the Yola neighbourhood.

"On September the 19th an unexpected event threw the whole village into excitement and panic. Earlier in the day I had noticed, to the north across the Benue valley, brown clouds. As I was out walking on the following afternoon, I suddenly found myself engulfed in a cloud of locusts. In their millions they hummed through the air, in their thousands they alighted on the ground, on bushes, trees and rocks, preferring the puddles and damp ground. At every step hundreds of them spiralled up and away, for they are timid, and even in flight will swerve away in front of people. The swarm was about forty metres high. In the fields the women were running around like lunatics, shrieking and beating their calabashes with sticks and waving enormous cloths in their attempts to frighten off the swarm. On the edge of the village the swarm was suddenly cut off. Soon, however, a second, smaller swarm flew in from the north-east. It was three hours before the last of the rearguard had flown away. Their speed would be that of a trotting horse, approximately one mile an hour,¹ so that the swarm must have been at least three miles long. In the afternoon it was still visible in the plain to the west of Yola. The damage that the locusts inflicted on the village was not very extensive, as nowhere had they settled long enough to devour much. The day enriched our cuisine with a new dish, namely roast grasshoppers. Wings and legs were torn off, and the bodies turned for two minutes in the hot ashes with a stick. They tasted rather insipid and bitter, and in no way could be described as a delicacy. What is more, nowhere here were they eaten by the local people, and our own servants watched disbelievingly the preparation of this new dish".

Towards the end of September the expedition had completed its astronomical observations and was ready to continue its journey. They had 144 loads and had so far mustered only 70 porters. Funds provided by the Berlin sponsoring committee did not allow them to increase the number of porters, so they had to try with the cheaper method of donkey transport.

1. A German mile is 7420 metres.

"In the immediate neighbourhood not a donkey was to be had. True, many of these desired beasts were daily grazing before our eyes round about the village, inevitably accompanied by a crowd of black ox-peckers gracefully perched on their backs, but unfortunately all these magnificent beasts belonged to the Emir. No donkey could be hoped for from the Yola direction because of the flooding of the path. Our only chance, of getting them from the north bank, proved hopeless. Admittedly, five beasts came for sale but they had to be rejected because of the high price asked. As it was now generally asserted that donkeys were obtainable in large numbers at Garua, it was decided to repair thither and have the surplus loads transported by canoe."

"But such a decision is much harder to execute in Africa than in Europe. First, it required the permission of the Emir even to set off; secondly, permission to travel as far as Garua; thirdly, permission to hire the canoes and polers; and fourthly a *laissez-passer*, addressed to the Emir's vassals and valid for the whole stretch of Adamawa".

Audu was sent off to Yola to inform the Minister of what was required, but the latter paid no attention to the request until mention was made of a fine roll of cloth. Canoes and carriers were at once promised, the *laissez-passer* would be drawn up by the Emir, and the Minister himself even intended to present the expedition with another horse. He showed Audu the steed that he would send over on the following morning, but Audu protested that his master would be quite unable to accept such a nag. The negotiations with the village headman, who was in charge of the royal canoes, and with the polers, took six days before agreement was reached on twelve 14 yard pieces of baft and four sacks of salt for the hire of the three canoes.

Two days later Uechtritz went down to Yola and was received coldly by the Minister for War with the news that the Emir would not permit them to travel to Garua, as he had heard that they intended to go on to Bagirmi. Of this he could never approve, since they would pass through many hostile tribes and he did not wish any misfortune to befall his friend. Nor might they depart for Bornu, as he was on terms of enmity with that kingdom. In any case, there could be no talk of departure or letters of safe passage, since the presents offered had been far too meagre. The onlookers, who filled the hut, murmured approval at these words. Uechtritz answered that he had always made it clear that he was not in a position to make large gifts, as he neither traded in ivory like Wallace, nor had he two ships like Mizon. Furthermore, Akal was a liar and double-dealer, full of empty promises, and Uechtritz would like to have a word with him in private. As soon as the hangers-on had withdrawn, Uechtritz began to flatter Akal and dangled hopes of further presents, so that the old Minister promised he would at once return to the Emir. On the very next day a free passage would be forthcoming, when Uechtritz might present himself with his farewell gifts.

On the 27th, a messenger arrived from Akal, admittedly without the promised horse, but nevertheless bearing the news that the way to Garua was open, for which favour he required five pieces of good cloth. Uechtritz replied that he would visit Yola in person on the following day, with his presents.

"With several pieces of satin, lace strips and baft for Akal, and an Arabic book, the *Makamen des Hariri*, he presented himself before the Minister. When, during the visit, Audu was about to hand over the book, Akal leaped up from his bed with a cry of 'Allah', threw himself to the ground, washed his face and hands with sand, and only then dared to receive, with pious awe, the holy book into the opened folds of his gown. The announcement that the book was not the Koran was unable to quieten his transports of ecstasy. 'The king', he cried, 'will rejoice more at this present than at all the others you have given him, and he will surely send a horse to you as a token of his pleasure'."

Three couriers arrived on the next day, with a diminutive and saddle-galled nag, as a preliminary present: they would, of course, like some velvet and salt. Uechtritz answered that Akal would receive neither till he had sent a reasonable mount. The next morning a huge, strong, fiery horse was led up, with a message that Akal was on board the hulk and would be returning to Yola via Kassa. He arrived at midday with an enormous entourage. His swollen cheek testified to a sleepless night and severe toothache, but he was not keen to accept Passarge's offer of extraction. The Doctor gave him some morphia and opium; he had taken nothing before for fear of being poisoned. Akal accepted the velvet, but the salt had to be obtained from the hulk... So the headman was sent off with a 'book' (i.e. a bill of exchange) for five sacks. Meanwhile, a further gift of crochet-thread induced Akal to agree to taking Uechtritz to the Emir for another audience there and then—time was short, as the Emir was due to leave Yola to spend five days in his summer palace at Girei. Akal went off to Yola, his last words being: "Don't forget to bring the salt with you".

Uechtritz rode down to Yola with several rolls of good cloth and a Koran for the Emir, and Passarge sent on the salt as soon as it had been brought up from the hulk.

"On the way to the Emir, Uechtritz noticed in the town several people in French uniform with French weapons, and a man with a French drum, parading about. Women were hurrying through the streets with calabashes full of food-stuffs. Preparations were afoot for a campaign against the pagans."

"This time the audience took place in a four-cornered palace, approached by a long corridor with siderooms off it, which ended in a courtyard where the Emir was sitting on a round mat under a kind of Venetian blind." He promised to write out the safe conduct letter himself as his Minister could neither read nor write, and the audience was brought to an early close by the imminence of a storm coming up from the east. Akal was by now beside himself because

the salt had not arrived, so his followers accompanied Uechtritz to the landing-place, where they met the canoe bringing the salt across from Kassa.

The letter was received from the Emir, but they were required to wait for a further three days.

At last, on October 3rd, the canoes were loaded and sent off to Garua. On the final evening the Emir's present arrived, a six-year dapple horse; and when the horse-boy had received his 'dash' of baft plus 200 cowries for the canoe-crossing to Yola, everything appeared to be set for the departure from Kassa.

Choosing to cross over to the north bank rather than follow the marshy south-bank route to Garua, they set forth at eight o'clock on October 5th, after surmounting the inevitable delays and the eventual disappearance of their headman. They descended the north ridge of Kassa to a small village where they crossed the Benue, a kilometre wide, in canoes and the hulk's boat. The six horses gave a lot of trouble and were half-dead by the time they reached the opposite bank. Not until 2.30 was the final load across, and it was three o'clock before the caravan got on the march. They climbed the outcrop of the western slope of Mount Bagale; below them, in the distance, the hulk was a mere black spot. They plunged into the green bush, and Yola was lost to view.

Passing the slave-hamlet of Linyi, they reached the larger village of Leinda at five p.m. where, amid the chaos of baggage and bodies, camp was prepared.

They set off again at 7 a.m. and reached Girei in three-quarters of an hour, "a big village of almost 3000 inhabitants, through which flows a river, 100 metres wide but now almost dried up." While the carriers were buying food, Passarge inspected the market, "an open space on the south bank of the river, covered with numerous market-stalls, that is to say, simple, flat-roofed grass coverings resting on six or eight bent branches some 1—1½ metres high. The shelters are twenty feet long and arranged in long ranks. This kind of market is found throughout Adamawa. We took our luncheon into a courtyard, under the eyes of several hundred onlookers, who stared at these curious creatures through the holes in the *zana* mats and down from tree tops. European chairs, our manner of sitting down, knife, fork, plates, everything was strange and seemed amusing to them."

It took them some time to assemble their porters from the market, but they set off again at 2.30, with Bagale on their right, on their left the plains stretching away to Wright mountain, and in front Hosere Dolle with Diginu Peak, the N.E. tip of the Bagale range. Behind Wuro Dolle they swung east, through a six kilometre pass between two hills, until they reached the Kanuri village of Diginu, where they spent the night. After travelling for about two hours on the next day, they left the laterite soil of the rocky foothills and came on to the alluvial Benue plain, a sign that they had circum-

navigated the Bagale range. That night they encamped at Bulkuttu, whence Passarge made a midnight expedition to the isolated hill that overlooks the Benue. Next morning they forded the Mayo Dasin at a favourable spot indicated to them by their host, thus thwarting the schemes of the solitary canoe-owner who had calculated on a large wage for transporting the caravan. For four pieces of Croydon (14 yards) the good man of Bulkuttu led them all the way to Dasin. This village was famous throughout Adamawa, for here, though nominally Fulani, the women lived in "oriental seclusion."

Cowries were no longer accepted as soon as they left Yola, and the people would sell provisions only in exchange for goods. Therefore an agreement was made that each carrier received half a piece of Croydon every day, with one yard each for both the headmen, the latter being responsible for the distribution of it all.

They spent the night at Barndaki. Here Passarge acquired a magnificent Fulani shield in return for administering medicine to the village headman, who was an important vassal of the Emir of Yola. On they marched towards Mount Saratse, which Passarge climbed on the following day in order to visit a Bata village on the summit called Beruere; but his guide, when ascending the hill, confessed he had no idea of the way up! On October 12th they slept at Kokomi, the former Bata capital, meeting with some Fali slaves, and on the next morning, at 10 o'clock, they entered Garua.

From Garua, "a town with a promising future", they travelled to Rai Buba, beating off a treacherous attack at Jirum on the way. Back at Garua, which served as a base for the expedition's exploration of the Adamawa hinterland, they decided to strike north to Marua, which they reached on December 23rd. "The town is strongly fortified with a wall and a moat; it is the richest sultanate of Adamawa and has spread its conquest over the pagan lands."

On the return journey to Ibi they followed Flegel's route as far as the River Faro, then crossed the Chebchi range, "which has a height of 6500 and stretches like a long wall in the direction of the volcanic line through Fernando Po and the Cameroons and of which the Mandara range is the northern continuation". Crossing the fertile plain of Muri sultanate, they reached Ibi on 20th March, 1894.

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HISTORY TEACHING IN NIGERIA : AN AMERICAN VIEW

by

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IN THIS PAPER I propose to discuss some of the characteristics of history teaching as I have experienced them in both Nigeria and the United States, draw some comparisons between practices in effect in the two countries, and hazard a few tentative suggestions for modification of methods of teaching in Nigeria. I feel that I am on reasonably firm ground, although since I received all of my education in the United States and taught history for a longer period there than I have in Nigeria, I naturally have a deeper knowledge of the profession on the other side of the Atlantic than on this.

After undergraduate days, during which I minored in history while majoring in English literature, most of my academic training was in the field of history. The universities which I attended were varied enough in character to permit a wide range of experience with American teaching; one was a small Baptist institution, another a large publicly-supported university, and the third a large privately-endowed university. My own teaching experience in the United States was similarly varied. At one time or another I taught in a medium-sized municipal college, a large public teacher's college, and a large public university. And although my own personal field of specialization is American history, I have taught courses in most major fields of history.

Since coming to Nigeria I have taught history in the Baptist College, Iwo, a Grade II teacher-training college. I teach the advanced history and half of the ordinary level history. In our college we have all three categories of students who may sit for the Grade II examination: post-secondary students, post-elementary training center students, and regular four-year higher elementary students. Thus I have been able to get some insight into the previous preparation in history of all types of students on this level. I have managed to gain additional acquaintance with the teaching of history in other Nigerian schools by visiting a number of secondary schools and training colleges, examining their history curricula, and talking with their history teachers. Certainly one of my best opportunities for becoming better acquainted with history teaching here—or at least with the results of it—has been that of serving on some of the panels of examiners for the Western Regional teacher certificate examinations.

My history teaching experience in Nigeria has been thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding. I have acquired a number of ideas which I will certainly put into effect in my teaching in the United States should I ever teach there again. I have also become aware of some areas of teaching in which I feel that some infusion of American

ideas and practices might prove of benefit. In the teaching of history, as in every other human endeavour, cultural interchange can be a means of strengthening both giver and receiver. It is in that spirit that I write.

But now to turn to consideration of some specific segments of history teaching, and to some comparison between American and Nigerian methods, especially those in teacher-training institutions. It should be pointed out that it is difficult to make precise comparisons, because of differences in the nature of educational institutions in the two countries, and also because of differences in terminology.

1. *Preparation and extent of specialization of teachers*

In the United States most teachers of history above the elementary level are definitely trained in history, and do most of their teaching in history, or at least in related fields such as civics or geography. The specialization for a teacher on the high school level normally consists of a bachelor's degree with a major or a minor in history; the earned Master of Arts or Master of Education degree with further specialization in history is rapidly becoming an additional requirement. A high school history teacher will not, however, be so deeply specialized in history that he is deficient in other subjects, for it is well-known that the American bachelor's degree requires, on the whole, less specialization than its British counterpart. During the past ten years it has become practically standard for the first two years of the B.A. course to be spent in "general education," with the last two years devoted to greater specialization. The extent of specialization of the American history teacher on the college and university level naturally is greater than on the high school level, with advanced degree majors in history a requisite.

It has been my observation that relatively few teachers of history in Nigeria are real specialists, either by training or by personal inclination. I realize that this is due to some extent to the relatively limited facilities for specialized training in history, but I also feel that facilities available are not being utilized to the fullest extent. For example a graduate of a Grade II teacher-training college who has successfully passed both ordinary and advanced level history, perhaps with credit, could proceed to take the G. C. E. examinations at ordinary and advanced levels, and if he chooses his fields for the G. C. E. so that they will complement his college work, rather than merely repeating it, he will have gained a fairly respectable knowledge of several fields of history by the time he becomes a Grade I teacher, and should be competent to teach ordinary level history in a training college. And if he has the initiative to do so, there is almost no limit to the amount of individual reading he can do to deepen his specialization. After all, as anyone who has specialized in history knows, the two main things one does are reading and writing, and given reasonable intelligence and any sort of access to

books, the reading, at least, can be done outside of a university library as well as inside. Specialization in a certain field of knowledge is a matter of personal pride and inclination, as well as of formal specialized training, and I believe that the level of history teaching will rise when more Nigerian teachers become history specialists, even if of the "home-grown" type. I have encountered some instances in which several people share the history teaching load, each teaching part-time in history and part time in such dissociated subjects as rural science, music, or mathematics. Would it not be productive of more efficient teaching by all these teachers if each chose a field of specialization and concentrated as much as possible on that subject? The lack of specialization does not apply, of course, to the increasing number of university-trained specialists in history teaching in the Nigerian schools.

There is even more marked contrast in the levels of preparation of history teachers in the United States and in Nigeria than in the respective extent of specialization. Here again I am fully aware that most of the deficiency in Nigeria is due to the lack of trained teachers at all levels, and that gradually it will be overcome. An American high school teacher must have a bachelor's degree, and in many instances an earned master's degree is also necessary. The bachelor's degree is also standard for elementary school teachers. On the college and university level the requirements are much higher. Except in very small institutions or when the teacher possesses some special individual qualifications, one or more graduate degrees are basic requirements. A teacher holding a master's degree may advance only to the rank of associate professor in a small college, to that of assistant professor in a medium-sized one, and may hold the rank of instructor in a large university. Doctor's degrees are necessary for professorships and other higher faculty ranks. This is the general pattern, with some exceptions: many small colleges have faculty rank requirements as high as the large universities, and some of the best large universities require doctorates even for holders of instructorships. A fairly general rule of thumb in American institutions is that the teacher must hold a qualification at least one level higher than that being sought by his students. This would not apply, of course, to those teaching doctoral students.

I am aware that in the British educational system, after which the Nigerian is patterned, there is not as much emphasis upon the possession of advanced degrees for teachers as in the United States, so it is probably not to be expected that Nigeria will soon adopt such principles. Nevertheless, I feel that the greatest efforts should be made to secure teachers with the highest possible qualifications. In my own school, which I suppose is about typical, we have several teachers who hold only Grade II certificates, the same qualification being sought by our students. No matter how potentially good these teachers might be, this seems entirely too low a qualification. Ideally, most Grade II college teachers should hold bachelor's

degrees, with the remainder holding at least Grade I certificates. Similarly, teachers in Grade III colleges should hold Grade I or Grade II certificates. Several of this year's graduates of our college will teach next year in high schools; I doubt seriously if Grade II certificate holders, many of whom have never been to high school themselves, can do an adequate job of teaching in high school. As in Grade II colleges, high school teachers should hold Grade I certificates or degrees.

2. *Syllabuses*

The second area of history teaching upon which I should like to comment is that of syllabuses. In the United States, since we have so many different types of schools, with no overall or uniform system or control, whether or not a particular school or a particular teacher uses a syllabus is largely up to that school or that teacher. Many schools do, while others take a purely textbook approach, with perhaps an accompanying list of parallel readings. I personally favour the syllabus system—properly conducted, I feel that it permits a much broader approach to the study of history than can be achieved through the study of a single textbook. I do feel, however, that the syllabus should be in such detail that the teacher who must depend on it will know precisely what he is expected to teach. The Nigerian Grade II teacher-training college history syllabuses are not that detailed. Take, for example, this part of the ordinary level syllabus, which is supposed to cover all of pre-history: "Primitive Man: How he lived; the domestication of animals and the development of agriculture; the effect these discoveries had on his way of life." And that is all! If a teacher taught only what is implied in this brief section, could his students be expected to know much about pre-history? Of course not. And so when it comes to teaching pre-history, I expect most teachers do what I do—forget the syllabus and go ahead and teach as much pre-history as they think reasonably necessary. The ordinary level syllabus, however, is much more adequate than the advanced level. The ordinary level one at least sketches the broad outlines of Western civilization, and so it would not be especially difficult to know what to teach even if there were no detailed syllabus. I merely adapted the first-year university course which I taught in the United States (with the exception, of course, of the section on Nigerian history), eliminating enough of the bulk of the material to make coverage possible in the time allocated here. The advanced level syllabus is so sketchy that one must not only guess what material he should cover, but also what the basic objective of the syllabus is. There is no general title to the entire syllabus as in the ordinary level, although one may deduce that a study of history with an emphasis upon government is proposed. The third section, which seems to be the weakest, runs thus: "Democracy in the Modern World. France. Germany. Italy. U.S.A. Russia. Plural Societies (e.g. British Commonwealth.)

The Road to Self-government—Ceylon, Jamaica, Trinidad, etc. International Government.” A number of questions come to my mind as I read this: What should be the starting point in time? If at the conventional date for the beginning of the modern period, could one hope to cover all of these topics in approximately two terms? Should Russia properly be considered under the heading of democracy? To the best of my knowledge, the only time in history when Russia experienced even a vestige of democracy was during the brief Kerensky regime immediately before the Communists took over in 1917. I have not yet been able to work out a satisfactory answer to these and other questions concerning the advanced level syllabus, and so I continue to wander in the desert without a shepherd.

A syllabus method of teaching, by its very nature, requires that the student get his knowledge from diverse readings in several books. The clear alternative to the syllabus method is the textbook method, in which the student relies primarily upon one textbook, and the teacher adheres fairly closely to the arrangement, coverage, and interpretation of that book. I believe that few history teachers in Nigeria are able to conform fully to the requirements of the syllabus method—I have certainly not been able to, with my students taking ten or twelve other subjects and with inadequate library facilities. On the other hand, it is hardly possible to use the pure textbook method, since a syllabus has been laid down which must be followed to some extent, at least. And so one finds himself caught between the upper and nether millstones. I have come to use, at least in the ordinary level course, a combination of textbook—syllabus method: I use a single textbook, but cover the material in the order and with the general emphasis of the syllabus.

3. Textbooks

Closely related to syllabuses are textbooks. I have found this to be among the weakest areas of history teaching in Nigeria, and I am sure that there is no good reason for this to be true. I have found that many of the training colleges use the Batten Series, *Tropical Africa in World History*, almost exclusively. The Batten Series seems to be a fine little series—for very young students in the last years of primary school, or even those in the first year or two of high school. But it seems hardly adequate for mature students in the upper years of a Grade II teacher-training college. What do you suppose would be the psychological effect upon the holder of a Senior Cambridge Certificate who enters a training college and is issued the same set of little books which he got six years before upon entrance to high school? Almost certainly he would feel that he had not made any progress—and that no one is expecting him to have done so. Other very small simplified histories I have seen in use appear similarly sketchy and inadequate.

Immediately after beginning teaching in Nigeria I set out to secure adequate textbooks for my students. After some investigation, I purchased a supply of a standard first-year American university textbook, *Western Civilization*, by Burns. I chose the American book rather than a British one not necessarily because I thought that it was better, but because I did not have time to become familiar with the various standard British texts, and also because I was able to buy the American books at a very favourable price through a used book company in the United States. I find that the one text serves admirably for the entire ordinary level course with the exception of the Nigerian portion, and that its arrangement and emphasis are reasonably close to that of the syllabus. The book is also useful for much of the advanced course.

As I have investigated textbooks I have heard three chief excuses for the use of the small, skimpy, often out-of-date textbooks. (1.) "The students have only a very small book-grant, and the little books don't cost much." I paid only a few shillings more for the one book I give my students than the cost of the Batten Series, and they get at least three times as much book for their money. Of course I bought the books second-hand, but a friend of mine in another Grade II training college uses an adequate British text which costs no more new than mine does used. Furthermore, many students would not hesitate to buy books in excess of the book-grant. (2.) "The larger books aren't available in quantity in Nigeria." Quite right—for the teacher who doesn't begin to think of his books for next year until the Christmas holidays. But a little foresight will take care of this, and England is only six weeks away, and the United States about two months. (3.) "The students can't understand the larger books—the little ones are more nearly on their intellectual level." I can't agree with this one, either—I think my students are no better than others, and the most constant complaint I heard until they got an adequate text was "Where can I read in greater detail about what we're discussing?" Certainly all of the students will not grasp everything in a text written for the mature student, but I cherish the old-fashioned idea that the only way you can educate a person is to keep his goal always a little higher than his current level of achievement. Don't descend to the student's level—try to pull him up towards yours. Really good textbooks will go a long way toward helping to bring this about.

4. *Library facilities and usage*

I will not linger long on this area, because in no other is the teacher bound by limitations beyond his control. I expect that many other libraries are as inadequate as ours, and I am sure that the inadequacies are due in large measure to the lack of demands placed upon the libraries. Admittedly the student carrying ten subjects in addition to history does not have the time—and often less inclination—to do extensive outside reading in history in the library. But I am

not convinced that the library is a lost cause, even in the teacher-training college, and I plan to break the news to my students that there is more to history than can be found between the covers of the one textbook in their hands. And we will all have to do the same if we ever take our students through the barrier between mere "training" and education. At relatively low cost a teacher can assemble a small collection of appropriate, up-to-date books which will provide reasonably adequate facilities for parallel readings in history. Some have done that, and I hope others will follow.

5. *Arrangement and emphasis of course content*

There is a marked basic difference in this respect between the American system and that of Nigeria, whether on the high school, teacher-training college, or university level. In the United States, the usual approach is something like this, regardless of level: the material content of history is broken down into separate and distinct "courses" on either a chronological or a topical basis, each designed to be covered in a specified period, either a semester (one-half year) or a full year. Here are some typical examples of titles of courses offered in one American college: Western Civilization; Political and Constitutional History of England; America in the Twentieth Century; Europe in the Nineteenth Century; The Hispanic Colonies and Republics of America; European Expansion Overseas, 1415—1898; War in the Modern World. In a large university the number of courses might run upwards of a hundred; in a small college to only a dozen or even less. Practically all students, whether in arts and sciences, engineering, pre-medical, or other fields, are required to study Western Civilization in the first year, and in some instances the general requirement includes a comprehensive history of the United States. Students not in the arts and sciences might take no other history, although quite possibly they would choose other courses as electives. A history major carries one or two courses each semester for his entire college period, for a total of ten or twelve half-year or five or six full-year courses. A history minor takes perhaps two-thirds that amount, while students majoring in the other arts and sciences take lesser amounts to complement their own major or minor fields.

Naturally American high schools do not offer as large a number or as wide a variety of history courses as the colleges and universities, since in a high school the student does not major or minor in a given subject, although he may elect one of several curricula with special emphasis, such as academic, technical, commercial, or home economics or vocational agriculture. In each of these curricula one or two years of basic history, usually World History and American History, are required, while in the academic curriculum the requirement is often greater, with the student taking, perhaps, Latin American and European History also.

In the history curricula of Nigerian teacher-training colleges and high schools, there is no break-down of the material to be covered into separate courses, but rather the entire material is considered as one course to be covered by all students. Or at least this is true of the ordinary level course. I understand that something of the same is true in the university for those who elect history as their principal subject. The difference between the American and Nigerian systems can partially be accounted for by the greater use of the free elective system in America, but even more so by the emphasis placed in Nigeria upon a single comprehensive examination at the end of the college, high school, or university period. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the two systems? The Nigerian system, operated under ideal conditions, provides for greater unity in presentation of the material, and gives a skilful teacher opportunity to demonstrate that all of history is a coherent whole. On the other hand, it is more susceptible to abuse by the teacher than the course system. Since there are no sharp lines of demarcation between years or terms, a teacher may get badly behind during one year, knowing that it will be possible for him to make up the material, even if sketchily, during the next. It is also too easy for a teacher to indulge his own interest in a particular section to the detriment of others with which he is less familiar or for which he has less personal liking. Clear division of the material into definite courses, with a firm requirement that each is to be covered in a specific time, would do much to insure adequate emphasis upon each part of the history curriculum. Many teachers are already making such divisions within the framework of the syllabus provided.

As I have said before, the ordinary level Grade II history syllabus is superior to the advanced level syllabus. This also applies to the respective emphasis of the two. The ordinary level syllabus shows a reasonable balance between ancient, medieval, modern, and Nigerian history. Yet many teachers tend to neglect the modern history section, either out of necessity, because they have not had adequate preparation in modern history, or by choice, feeling that on the basis of past examinations students will not need to know much modern history in order to pass. Any teacher who neglects modern history is doing his students a great disservice, for certainly any student preparing for entrance into teaching in a growing, vital country such as Nigeria, which is rapidly being brought more closely into the orbit of international affairs, needs to have a sound knowledge of modern events, movements, and philosophies, along with those of another day. And yet I expect that others find, as I do, that students know a great deal more about medieval feudalism or ancient Greek democracy than they do about modern Communism or democracy. Evidently the foundation has been laid, but often no house is built upon it.

The objective of the advanced level Grade II history course, as I have said, is apparently a study of certain phases of history with an

emphasis upon Government. The first section deals with primitive, Greek, and Roman government, the second with English constitutional history, and the third with modern government. For students who may never attend formal history classes again, I am not sure that all of these represent the best possible choice. Properly taught, the ancient period of the ordinary level course should cover primitive, Greek, and Roman government adequately, so the first section seems superfluous and repetitious. As to British constitutional history, is a detailed knowledge of British government more important to a young Nigerian, standing with his country on the threshold of political independence, than a detailed knowledge of the government of his own country? I am fully aware that the Nigerian government, as it is today and as it doubtless will be after independence, is partially based upon the English system, and that an understanding of the English system is requisite to an understanding of Nigerian government. I also know that a small part of the ordinary level syllabus is devoted to Nigerian government. Nevertheless, I feel that much greater emphasis should be placed upon Nigerian government, and correspondingly less upon British constitutional history. In view of serious weaknesses in two-thirds of the advanced level syllabus and a lack of definition in the other third, the entire syllabus could be revised with profit. Certainly the emphasis upon government, like no other field the companion of history, should be retained. But the approach should be changed. Perhaps a study of comparative government would best serve the needs of the students. They might study the principles of the various forms of government—monarchy, republican democracy, responsible democracy, dictatorship, Communism, fascism, and others—with operation of the forms being demonstrated by historical events. Then at least a third of the advanced course should be devoted to a detailed study of Nigerian government, correlating it with British constitutional history wherever necessary.

A final word under this heading about history as taught in Nigerian high schools. Most of the high schools concentrate, wholly after Class IV and to some extent even earlier, upon the small specialized segment of history in which the students will be examined in the school certificate examination. This is usually British Empire history. Quite naturally a school wants to do all it can to help its students pass the examination they are preparing for, but of what general value is a detailed knowledge of British Empire history when even a rudimentary knowledge of most other fields is lacking? A few high schools do try to give a broad background of history, something akin to Western Civilization, before beginning the period of concentration. I have no specific suggestions here, but certainly there seems to be a defect in the system.

6. *Time allotment and scheduling*

Again, in this respect, there is a marked difference between practices in American colleges and high schools and those in Nigerian

teacher-training colleges. In most American colleges a student meets a history course for three class hours of fifty minutes each per week. In high school there are more meetings, usually five of forty minutes duration. In my college here—and I assume our time allotment is about typical—I meet each of my classes only twice a week for thirty-five or forty minutes. The system of short classes at infrequent intervals has been developed, I suppose, because of the necessity for a student to carry the ten or twelve courses over which he will be examined throughout his college career. I have found both concentration and coverage of the required material very difficult under this system. Students tend to forget in the sometimes four or five day interval between classes, and too much time is lost in stopping and starting. The only way this could be altered, limits of student endurance being what they are, would be to reduce the number of subjects which a student carries at one time. This would be beneficial not only to the teacher who is frustrated with piecemeal teaching, but also to the student who is, I suspect, somewhat harried from dashing madly from one subject to another with little time to concentrate upon any. My experience in American institutions confirms this; an American college or university student normally carries only five courses at a time, while a high school student, since he meets each class daily, usually carries only four, although perhaps an additional non-academic subject such as music or typing. Obviously under the American system the student has more time per subject for outside study and preparation.

Assuming, then, that it would be desirable to reduce the number of subjects taken at one time, how could this be achieved? There seem to be three possibilities: first, reduce the overall scope to the college course. This must be rejected, since a teacher-training college student gets only the minimum necessary training under the present system. Second, combine separate but related subjects into single subjects. One possibility, for example, would be combination of the various mathematics and arithmetics; but at best only a small reduction in the number of courses could be made. The third possibility would be for the student to take about half of the required subjects, finish them completely, and then move on to another group of subjects. This, I believe, would offer the best solution to the problem. Before it could be done, there would have to be a change in the philosophy that a student stands a better chance of passing his final examinations if he has carried a small segment of each subject right up to the examination. Frankly, I doubt if a student would be able to write a better paper in ancient history, which he completed three years before, because he studied modern history this year, when students were permitted to take their government examinations in some subjects at the end of the next-to-last year. In history I think it would be of special value for the ordinary level course to be completed before the advanced course is begun. In

many ways the advanced course is that in name only, since those enrolled are carrying the ordinary level course simultaneously, and in many cases the teacher has not been able to determine fully which of his ordinary level students are really superior and thus eligible for the advanced course. The latter is due largely to the fact that post-secondary and post-elementary training centre students must cover a four-year syllabus in two years, the same time allotted to the advanced level course. The whole matter of both four-year and two-year students being taught in the same school with the same syllabus has troubled me more than any other aspect of teaching in Nigeria, I think, and I see no solution short of a complete revision of the system of teacher training.

7. *Examinations*

In no areas are the Nigerian and American systems more at opposite poles than that of examinations. Here I refer not to term or year examinations, for they are much the same, but to final comprehensive examinations, such as the School Certificate examination, the government teachers' certificate examination, and university bachelor's degree examinations. Except in a few American schools or in the case of some prospective teachers who have not completed the requisite amount of academic work, examinations such as those upon which so much emphasis is placed in Nigeria no longer exist in the United States below the post-graduate level. To a person reared in the aura of such examinations, operation of a vast educational system without them seems incredible, I am sure. But this stems from a basically different approach in America to the securing of an academic qualification, whether it be high school diploma, teacher's certificate, or bachelor's degree. In America these are secured by the "cumulative" method ; that is, by a progressive building up of credits on the basis of courses satisfactorily passed. Under the Nigerian and British systems, securing the qualification is dependent upon passing a single examination or a series of examinations. The comprehensive examination system has certain advantages, but, I feel, the cumulative method requires a more uniformly satisfactory level of accomplishment by the student throughout his school career. It also helps to prevent what one recent Nigerian writer called "examination psychosis." Acquisition of knowledge is the proper aim of any educational process, and the examination should be incidental; if passing the examination becomes the primary aim, and the acquisition of knowledge merely incidental, the system is out of balance, I fear.

I have made a number of suggestions for modification of methods of teaching history in Nigeria as I have discussed the various phases of teaching. At this point I should like to summarize them: (1.) Every effort should be made to raise the level of preparation of teachers of history, and more emphasis should be placed upon specialization in history. (2.) Syllabuses should be revised to

provide greater detail and clearer definition of approach. (3.) More adequate textbooks should be used, library facilities should be improved, and students should be required to make greater use of the library. (4.) History content should be more clearly defined and separated into distinct courses, and more emphasis should be placed upon modern history and Nigerian government. (5.) High schools should broaden their history offerings. (6.) Courses should be arranged in such a way that students will carry only about half as many at one time as at present, thus permitting more uninterrupted concentration upon the subject at hand.

I do not offer these as an infallible panacea, but I believe that consideration and adoption of at least some of them would prove helpful to the cause of history teaching in Nigeria.

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WHAT HISTORY DOES THE NIGERIAN PUPIL NEED?

by

M. C. ENGLISH

HISTORY TEACHING in schools today is probably in a more unhappy state than any other subject. This is because there is less agreement on what to teach, and less self-confidence among the protagonists of various points of view. There is disagreement about the periods to teach, and the aspects of life to deal with, and about methods. This I believe to be partly due to the great extension of the range of historical enquiry in recent times, so that in any case there is more need than there used to be, to be selective in deciding what material to present to the young. But it is perhaps more important that while there has been a reaction against the excessively political approach to history teaching of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so far as the classroom is concerned no alternative has succeeded in carrying general conviction. The old approach, which is now stigmatised as a mere memorising of kings and battles, is condemned on the ground that the material rarely was properly memorised, and was practically meaningless even when it had been memorised. In other words, it had insufficient connection with the child's environment. But there has been a loss of faith in some circles in the validity of history teaching whatever the material chosen. Another reason for condemning the old approach was alleged to encourage a jingoistic nationalism contrary to the requirements of the modern world. But a basically similar objection applies to any other approach. It has been observed, long before George Orwell burlesqued the idea, that there are as many histories as there are divisions of mankind. Each age, each country, each party, each denomination, every human group in fact, teaches its own form of history. Indeed, it is from this that we see that the object of teaching history is always to lead the child into a particular social group, and to imbue it with the attitudes of that group. Since this will in any case be the real object, it had much better be the conscious object, so that we may rationally consider what group the child is destined to join. Sometimes attempts have been made to carry matters a stage further. If the teacher doesn't like any features of his own society, he may devise a form of history which will condition his pupils for the altered society which he desires to see established. Such an attempt to determine the development of society is not only presumptuous on the part of the teacher; it is also almost certain to be of no avail, unless the specially framed syllabus can be uniformly imposed on all children of the people concerned, which presupposes a dictatorial government. The history teacher in a free society should at least *try* to accept that society as it is, even though complete

impartiality is difficult to achieve. He should, however, take a comprehensive view of that society. His teaching, if effective, will be one influence, among many, helping to determine the attitudes of his pupils to things in general. Those attitudes should enable the pupil to enter into the whole fullness of the environment in which he will have to live and to enjoy the best it has to offer. This involves understanding its roots, cultural as well as physical. I stress "cultural" because the extra-curricula sources of cultural development of the average pupil seem to be far less in Nigeria than in many other countries, so that this aspect of the subject assumes proportionately more importance here. Understanding one's own society also includes seeing it in perspective. The history of other countries must be taught not only where its bearing on (for our purposes) Nigerian history is direct, but, so far as circumstances permit, for the sake of general comparison.

So much for the general; now for the particular. What are the historical elements making up modern Nigerian society?

First of all comes tribal tradition. In this I would include not only the legendary or semi-legendary traditions of tribal origins and great ancestors, but would also include the traditional tribal organisation; methods of agriculture, handicrafts and trading, and the religious beliefs of which the influence spreads into social behaviour and medicine. These traditions have been much modified of late, and the process of modification continues apace. In some sections of the community they are relegated to the background or even completely denied. None the less they are the *first* teachings of all but a negligible minority of Nigerian children. They are absorbed in the home; and they represent a way of life which must always be returned to in periodical visits, and an environment which must always be taken into account however emancipated a man may personally become.

The second element is that body of history and tradition which is common to all Nigeria irrespective of tribe. I refer to the interactions and conflicts of the kingdoms or chieftancies which arose in the past in various parts of the country, especially the North and West, and their effects on the less politically developed parts at that time; to the significance of the similarities and differences in their histories and cultural traditions; and to the external influences which affected the rise and decline of Nigerian powers, most notably the early trading contacts with peoples from North Africa and Europe. In this section I personally would like to see greater prominence than is usual given to those artistic products which, though the special property of a particular tribe, have come to be identified with Nigeria as a whole and to be part of the common Nigerian heritage.

Lastly, but not less in importance, come the imported elements in modern Nigerian culture, and in the Nigerian society which is even now in the process of being built up. Most of these come

from Britain, or at least through Britain even though many originated elsewhere. The chief alternative source of imported elements is Islam. Among these importations, attention seems to be focussed by current events on political and constitutional ideas; but economic and purely cultural borrowings are no less in extent, and may prove to be more important in the long run. From Britain, however, Nigeria is taking an end-product, to appreciate which properly a knowledge of its sources and development is required. The strange results of imitating the outward form when the inward spirit is not understood have often been the subject of ill-considered criticism, but they are real enough. There is one source of British ideas which is worthy of separate treatment, because it is the source fundamental to modern culture virtually everywhere in the world; namely, the ideas derived from the ancient or "Classical" world.

The basic needs of a Nigerian history syllabus thus become clear. Firstly, Nigerian history should be taught as fully as the teacher's resources permit. I shall revert later to the limitations which those resources impose. I think it will be generally agreed that this should be a history of Nigeria as a whole. Exclusively tribal history is too limited in its material and in the society for which it prepares the pupil. There may be, however, greater emphasis on the history of the tribe or tribes of the area in which the school happens to be situated. Local emphasis of this sort serves two purposes. It will be particularly useful in relating history to the pupil's environment. With this object, developments common to the whole country should always be illustrated when possible by reference to events which occurred in the immediate locality, even if they are less spectacular than events in other parts. Local emphasis is also especially appropriate in the junior classes where the well-established teaching principle of working from the known to the unknown should predominate. But though this local history is desirable as an element in teaching method, the result should be to ensure that the pupil understands the problems of all parts of the country. Further, since the pupil is to be inducted into modern intellectual Nigerian society, he should leave school with a knowledge not only of political, economic and social developments, but of the more outstanding cultural products of his country. Every English school-leaver has at least heard of Stonehenge, the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, the plays of Shakespeare and numerous other ingredients in his cultural heritage; and to the more intellectually inclined, these things verge on the hackneyed. There is no equal familiarity in Nigeria with historic works of art such as those of Ife, Benin, or Jema'a; or with the distinctive architectural styles which flourish in different parts of the country.

Secondly, British history should be taught in so far as it is necessary to an understanding of British culture. Nigeria is borrowing ideas from Europe as a whole, but British history is probably the most useful vehicle for the explanation of European culture. Apart

from its having its distinctive features, mainly constitutional, there is clearly not time to deal with European history in full. I may say here, in passing, that I believe more value is derived from a relatively detailed study of one country than from an attempt to cover the history of a whole continent. Some people recommend covering very large areas in what may be called "broad sweeps". This leads to cramming ready-made generalisations into minds which have to be uncritically and unquestioningly receptive, because there is no time to give the lengthy information which would justify the generalisations. Far too much history teaching dulls the curiosity of pupils by spoon-feeding their minds. Indeed, one Government secondary school in this country has cut history out of its curriculum altogether on the grounds that it provides no mental discipline. We must avoid this stricture by allowing plenty of opportunity for pupils to see the detailed working out of developments and for dealing with any difficulties of understanding cause and effect which may arise in their minds. However, since British history is being taught partly as a sample of general European development, this will influence our selection of material to teach from it. Considerable emphasis is rightly laid in the School Certificate syllabus entitled "Development of Tropical Africa" on the growth of constitutional forms in Britain. Personally, I think that local government and other forms of organisation below the central government level should not be neglected, especially in those Regions which wish to introduce the same pattern here. But I would also stress the necessity of some historical background before English literature can be enjoyed, and for this purpose an acquaintance with social customs is probably the most important.

The third element in the Nigerian history syllabus is the ancient world from earliest Egypt to Roman times. Clearly the dangers of "broad sweeps" will arise here. Apart from the direct though attenuated influence of Egypt on other parts of Africa, the subject is being taught chiefly because of the incessant literary and cultural allusions to it which the pupil will meet outside the history lesson. It is necessary to identify Palestine, Greece, and Rome with the ideas to which they gave birth and which are still current. It is possible that these will be given greater vividness by detailed stories of individuals or of small localities like Athens and Sparta than by comprehensive generalisations.

There may be a case for the inclusion of the early history of Islam in the syllabus, in those parts of the country where Mohammedanism predominates. I think it is unnecessary elsewhere, and I have in practice found it difficult to arouse any enthusiasm for a subject which is too remote from the local environment. It may well be, on the other hand, that in the North the pupils are sufficiently informed about it from extra-curricula sources, so far as concerns the general history syllabus as opposed to a specialised study of Islamic institutions.

Lastly, for the purpose of setting all in perspective, the syllabus must cover the expansion of Europe in recent times and the reactions to it in other parts of the world, including West Africa. This again is likely to be taught with the expansion of Britain as the central theme, though developments in French West Africa merit more attention than they have tended to receive, at any rate until recently.

So far we have been considering what it would be desirable for the Nigerian secondary school pupil to learn. We have not yet thought about how far the pupil himself is prepared to receive the information. When he enters a secondary school, how far is he aware of historical influences, and to what extent is he likely to acquire knowledge outside school? The answers which I shall suggest to these questions are based on an experience confined to southern Nigeria, and particularly to Eastern Nigeria. The answers may be different in the North, though I doubt it. Certainly I doubt it so far as the extensive non-Muslim areas of the North are concerned, and even elsewhere unless Hausa and Fulani pupils are selected from a narrow group in or near the traditional ruling families. So far as the West is concerned, we have a small number of Yorubas and Edos in our Eastern schools, and I have not found them notably different in this respect from the others. They have all, naturally, absorbed the traditional way of life in greater or less degree, but the amount of tribal history the pupil knows is usually surprisingly small. If he does know any it is confused, and suffers from the factual and chronological unreliability of traditions. Tribal history is certainly ignored in the primary schools, and so are all other aspects of tribal culture with the rare exceptions of dancing and handicrafts on the part of a very few enthusiastic teachers. So far as pan-Nigerian history is concerned, it cannot be assumed that the primary school syllabus has been taught, far less that it has been learnt. The former existence of the slave trade is the one generally known fact. About one pupil in ten has heard before of the early visits of the Portuguese and of the Fulani conquests, but can give no worth-while information about them. That is the fullest extent of the knowledge of the brightest two or three in a class of thirty. Nigerian cultural achievements are unknown and tend to be disbelieved. How the connection with Britain arose is normally unknown. Indeed, it is the history of the ancient world which is the period best known to the average primary school leaver: well known relatively to the others, that is.

The pupil's initial knowledge is thus negligible, and what instruction he has received has been given inconsequently. The outstanding feature of the first-year pupil, from the history teacher's point of view, is that he is completely lacking in any historical sense. His sense of time is limited and he has no sense of period. If he does not live wholly in the present as that phrase is usually accepted, at any rate he lives in a span of about twelve years, his own lifetime and the immediate future. Anything beyond the effective limits of his own memory is

all one. Socrates, Usman dan Fodio, and Lord Lugard might be contemporaries. The late war is virtually unknown. Of course, this is a reflection of the extreme narrowness of local life. No doubt in a boundary dispute, or a question of who pledged a piece of land to whom in what circumstances, the family memory is long and tenacious. But the sphere within which a knowledge of the past is useful in village life is small. Hence the great importance of our subject in Nigeria. It not only widens the pupil's experience in space, but in time as well. The inter-relationship between history teaching and the teaching of other subjects needs to be much closer and more direct in Nigeria than in Europe. If the facts are to be got across, a history lesson must include digressions not only into elementary geography, but into elementary geology, physics, engineering and biology as well. It may be difficult to persuade the teachers of other subjects to treat them historically, but at least we must be prepared to make good the deficiency in our own lessons if we are to make the past live. Otherwise our lessons will become mere cramming of facts and dubious interpretations, something to be swotted for an exam. but making no lasting impression on the mind.

How do these considerations of the conditions in which we meet the pupil affect the order in which we bring to him the required subject matter? In other words, how best shall we arrange our syllabus? The normal proceeding would be to teach Nigerian history first, on the principle of starting from what is familiar and can be locally illustrated. Unfortunately Nigerian history presents certain practical disadvantages and difficulties. The aids to teaching it are not all they might be, and few teachers know much about the subject themselves. These teaching difficulties might be overcome, but even if they are the subject matter itself is not ideal if our object is to encourage a time sense. I believe it to be desirable to give the Nigerian pupil as early as possible a firm and clear chronological framework, and that Nigerian history doesn't do. Before 1800 at the earliest the dating of events in Nigerian history and the description of the basic features of early historical periods is dependent on reference to the better known history of other peoples, whether European, Islamic or Egyptian. In present circumstances it may be easier for the Nigerian pupil to find his way about the history of other countries than his own.

In view of this I think it better not to tackle Nigerian history straight away, but to spend the first year on pre-history and the history of the ancient Mediterranean world. This is not all completely foreign, because the summary of prehistoric development is something common to all men, and the ideas generated in the ancient world, which will be the aspect on which the teacher will chiefly dwell, became potent later influences on Nigeria. This can be made to lead without too violent a transition to Nigerian history in the second year. The few facts known about Nigerian pre-history, which do not in isolation provide a sufficient clear and

simple picture for school use, let alone for junior school use, can be fitted into the framework of general development already established. The infiltration, if in an attenuated form, of ideas from ancient Egypt, and possibly some migration of peoples from the same general direction, is the outstanding known feature of Nigerian history before the advent of Islam and European contacts. In this way, Nigerian history can be introduced. It should be taught with strong emphasis on chronology and verifiable facts. Tradition may be used where it is supported by other sources; or it may be discussed or explained in the light of other sources of information. But there should be no unqualified repetition of unsubstantiated traditions, whether they take the form of legendary tribal history or modern prejudices.

The next year and a half, that is, the pupil's time in Class Three and part of Class Four, should be given to British history, always remembering that through British examples we are illustrating general European development. Emphasis should be laid on the social aspects and on technological changes, because these are necessary for an understanding of English literature. For this purpose the social aspects will include the stages of development of classes, their outlook and mutual conflicts, and their conventions and fashions. Technological advances are also important as influencing the overseas expansion of Europe. Lastly, great attention must of course be paid to the growth of governmental institutions. However, we should in my opinion teach British history for its own sake in the middle school. We should not give such disproportionate time to the parts which will recur in whatever School Certificate syllabus we decide to adopt that in effect we start cramming for School Certificate in Class Four. To spend excessive time on that syllabus, going over it again and again, merely reduces the breadth of our whole teaching.

If we reckon on the usual five year course to School Certificate, we are now left with one and a half years to deal with the School Certificate syllabus. It is at this stage that the integration of the various subjects which we have chosen for junior work, and the placing of the country's history in world perspective, can be accomplished. Our choice of School Certificate subject is of course liable to influence the syllabus mapped out for earlier years. Ideally, this should be reversed, and the School Certificate syllabus drawn up in the light of what we wish to get across so that it forms a natural conclusion. The existence of an examination syllabus has a powerful influence on the pupil as well as on the teacher. The attitude which makes the examination the sole object of secondary education is strong, especially among parents. In the light of existing conditions in this country, I fully understand this attitude. I consider it unrealistic and unsympathetic to thwart it unnecessarily. While we should do all we can to widen the pupil's interests beyond mere exam. passing, I think we shall not attain that object if we lose

their confidence by appearing to waste their time. We should rather strive to make use of this urge, and gain our own objectives by directing it into the right channels. From this point of view, all the School Certificate syllabuses at present existing have the great weakness of encouraging a neglect of Nigerian history. The "Development of Tropical Africa" syllabus is too general, tending to treat West or East Africa as a whole and tending to concentrate on very recent political events. There is no inducement to teach or learn of the country's cultural heritage and in that way to intensify that everyday interest in one's surroundings without which life becomes narrow and barren. Nor is that syllabus really effective for putting Nigerian history in perspective for its range is very limited. I doubt the usefulness of East African history as a foil to set off the West African situation, or to interest the pupil. It is as foreign as the history of other continents and its content is too slim to be very stimulating. Purely from my own point of view, I put forward that the "British Empire and Commonwealth" paper is the best of those available as an integrator and as a setting for the West African situation. It has the disadvantage that West Africa occupies a very small place in it, and only British West Africa is considered at all.

Finally, I wish to refer briefly to the possibility of the objects of history teaching being fulfilled outside the formal history lesson. The "feel" of an historical period is often far more vividly presented by an historical novel than by any textbook. If available, and not too difficult to follow, an historical film may do even more, and so may an historical play acted by the pupils themselves. Many novels serve this purpose which would not be classed as historical novels. The stories given in a contemporary setting by writers of fifty, a hundred, or a hundred and fifty years ago all provide period background. To make use of this material, I recommend that there should be a close co-operation between the history teacher and the teacher of English in the preparation of lists for library borrowing. Wide general reading is the most stimulating factor in education, and in this country is the most neglected.

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SCHOOL CERTIFICATE HISTORY SYLLABUSES

IN NIGERIA

by

H. F. C. SMITH

THIS PAPER is an attempt to consider some of the principles which underlie the selection of examination syllabuses in history for the first school certificate in Nigerian secondary schools, to comment on the suitability of the syllabuses at present available, and to suggest the lines on which a new alternative syllabus might be constructed.

The suggested basis of selection

Once it is agreed that a knowledge of history can usefully be examined at the first school certificate stage, the problem of selecting a limited subject-period for examination from among the enormous mass of historical material which can nowadays be made available to secondary school students through the English language immediately becomes a very important one. For it is clear that *any* subject-period will not do for all students everywhere. At the secondary school level, obviously, it is not a generalised dexterity in the understanding and use of historical material which is being examined, but actual knowledge of a particular subject-period. In the well established examination systems of western Europe, this problem of choice is solved by selecting for examination those subject-periods a knowledge of which is generally thought to be important to the students concerned. The subject-periods chosen there are almost all from European history. The students are Europeans; they are heirs to the culture of Europe; and it is undoubtedly important to them *as Europeans* to understand how Europe has become what it is today. For these reasons it is not normally considered worthwhile to examine European students in a knowledge of Chinese or Indian history, except where such history involves the record of European activities in those countries. Similarly, in the rather less well established secondary school systems of the independent Arabic-speaking world it is becoming common to examine students in a period from the history of the Middle East. For the Arabs accept the same principle, namely: that some knowledge of how the peoples of the Middle East have come to be what they are today is important for students born, and likely to live, in that part of the world. Again, in the Indian sub-continent, students are examined nowadays in Indian or Indo-Pakistan history, because, out of all the possible alternatives, such history is thought to be most important to the students concerned.

This simple criterion of importance would not, of course, require any emphasis, were it not for the fact that uncertainty appears to

exist in the educational world as to what actually *are* the most important subject-periods of history to teach to Nigerian secondary school students. Before attempting to discuss this question, however, I should perhaps indicate the position I take up on two closely connected matters. First, there should not, I think, be any suggestion that there is any one perfect school certificate examination syllabus in history which all Nigerian students must follow. Alternatives must always be available. What I am rather suggesting is that no subject-period which, on logical grounds, would seem to be very important for Nigerian students to study, should be excluded from among the available syllabuses, while apparently less important ones are included. Secondly, while appreciating the strong arguments which have been put forward for teaching some sort of "world history" in secondary schools (rather than national or regional history)¹, I take the view that a useful understanding of world history can only come after regional studies have been made. And I believe that regional or national studies, conducted in an unprejudiced manner, have an educational value far in advance of generalised world history, because they much more directly assist the student in understanding the nature of his environment. At best I regard world history as a possible alternative so far as examination syllabuses are concerned, and I do not wish further to discuss it here.

With these two provisos then, what is an important subject-period for Nigerian students to take? Several attempts have of course been made in the past to answer this question. Over twenty years ago, D. C. Somervell raised the matter by suggesting that it might be important not to teach exactly the same subject matter in Nigerian schools as was taught for examination purposes in schools in England.² More recently the important work of T. R. Batten, beginning with the publication of his well known text-books between 1938 and 1940³ bore fruit in the realm of examinations in 1952 with the incorporation of an entirely new subject-period (the Development of Tropical Africa) in the examination syllabuses offered in West Africa by the Cambridge University Examinations Syndicate. Finally, the West African Examinations Council has now approved an important modification to this new syllabus in the addition of a section on Islamic history. This section, which has been included at the request of the educational authorities in Northern Nigeria, will first be examined in 1957.

The present position in Nigeria is that secondary schools presenting candidates for the first school certificate are able to examine their students in one of the following subject-periods:—

1. e.g. C. P. Hill, *Suggestions on the Teaching of History* (UNESCO, Paris, 1953)
2. D. C. Somervell, *Problems of History Teaching* (Nigerian Teacher, I., 4, 1935)
3. T. R. Batten, *Tropical Africa in World History* (4 parts, OUP, 1938-40)

- (1) a period from medieval and/or modern British and European history;
- (2) the history of the British Empire and Commonwealth to 1939;
- (3) the development of tropical Africa (a somewhat complex syllabus, the details of which I shall consider later).

At first sight these might appear to comprise a useful variety. On the grounds of importance to Nigerian students, moreover, the selection would seem easily to be justified in the following ways. In the case of British and European history, the activities of Europeans (especially Britishers) have clearly had an extremely important influence on Nigeria, and therefore a knowledge of how European culture has evolved is important for a proper understanding of modern Nigeria. The justification for British Empire history is even simpler. Nigeria is a part of the British Empire. Both Europe and the British Empire, moreover, represent forces to be reckoned with in the present day world generally, and for this reason too it is important for Nigerians to study their history. Finally, in perhaps an even more intimate sense than that in which it is part of the British Empire, Nigeria is part of tropical Africa, and no-one would think of denying that Nigerians should be given the opportunity of studying the history of that region of the world.

The simple criterion of 'importance to the student' does appear to be accepted here. But what I have in mind is that the term 'importance' should be rather more closely defined if we are to see the real significance of these syllabuses, for clearly the term can be interpreted in a number of different ways. I am in fact suggesting that somewhere among the different types of 'importance to the students' which are represented in the alternative examination syllabuses, there should be provision for importance defined as 'usefulness for enabling the student to understand how he and the society in which he is born and lives have become what they are today'. This is, of course, by no means the *only* lesson which is to be learned from a study of history; there are very many such lessons. But the argument I am proposing is that among the various examination syllabuses available to secondary schools there should be at least one which is calculated when taught to help the student towards such self-understanding.

An analysis of the syllabuses at present available

It is in the light of this specific criterion that I wish first of all to examine the school certificate syllabuses now available in Nigerian schools.

British and European history. It is not, I think, difficult to show that if a Nigerian student during his secondary school course studies nothing but European history, he will certainly (should he bother to think about it at all) obtain a very distorted idea of how Nigeria has come to be what it is. There will be a strong tendency, for example,

for him to picture European history as having a sort of automatic and remote-control effect on Nigeria without the necessity of any connecting process. Distortion of this nature is evident in the not uncommon belief that European institutions can be exactly copied and established in Africa (for the purpose of performing the functions which they perform in Europe) without any preliminary assimilation to African ways of life. Again, the attitude will be encouraged that disregards the importance of anything in African society which is not of European origin. Thus the student will fail, for example, (as many secondary school students in Southern Nigeria do) to appreciate the significance of Islam in Nigerian society. These and other connected distortions of outlook surely constitute a matter for educational concern.

Where European history is taught in Nigerian schools, it is taught in exactly the same way, with exactly the same approach, as it is taught in British schools in the British Isles. In Britain this teaching is intended primarily to show British students how the society in which they live has become what it is. This is obviously quite a different thing from showing Nigerian students how *their* society has become what it is. Whatever else it teaches Nigerian students, therefore, this syllabus as taught cannot teach them self-understanding.

On the other hand, if we were to abstract from the mass of European history just those topics which provide an explanation of the origins of European influence in Nigeria, and teach these to Nigerian students, it might be argued that we should then be teaching a lesson of self-understanding. But this would do justice neither to the history of Europe nor to the history of Nigeria, and again in fact would, as I hope to show, be of very little significance in this matter of Nigerian self-understanding.

Of course, those students who take British and European history in the first school certificate examination usually study some other history earlier in their school career. If, in such earlier stage, a history syllabus can be and is taught which does assist this self-understanding, then this is good, but, from the point of view of the secondary educational system as a whole, not enough. For so important, I suggest, is this lesson of self-understanding, that there must be provision for teaching it somewhere among the various school certificate history syllabuses which a student could take if he wanted to. For this reason it is I think necessary here to proceed with an analysis of *all* the syllabuses available.

History of the British Empire and Commonwealth. I think that much the same can be said about this syllabus as I have already said about British and European History. In Nigerian secondary schools it is taught in exactly the same way as that in which it is taught in English secondary schools in England. It involves therefore not so much a history of the British Empire in the sense of a history of all the terri-

tories which comprise that empire, but rather a history of the creation of the empire and an account of British imperial activities. It is perfectly possible to pass the examination in it without writing the word Nigeria. Even if we held the view that British imperial activities created modern Nigerian society (a view which is, of course, untenable), the syllabus as it stands would not therefore help us explain this view to students. Again, the English student is heir to the imperial tradition. It is perfectly possible for him to sit at the centre of the empire and look out across it with feelings of pride in the achievements of his ancestors. To him the history of the empire is the record of important achievements of his people, and it is, no doubt, important for him to understand this record. But the Nigerian student cannot possibly put himself in this position for the simple reason that *his* ancestors did *not* create the empire. And therefore the point of view appropriate to this syllabus can have no possible connection with his self-understanding.

Finally, even if the history of the British Empire "with special reference to Nigeria" were studied instead of the syllabus at present available, it would still, as I hope to show, be inadequate for the purpose we are discussing.

The Development of Tropical Africa. Turning now to the last of the syllabuses in use in Nigeria we must I think recognise that its title does indicate a new departure in connection with the criterion of importance for self-understanding. Quite clearly, Nigerian students do require to know something about how tropical Africa has become what it is today, for they are in every sense part of tropical Africa, and the peoples of which they are members have, generally speaking, lived in that region since time immemorial. Nigerian secondary school teachers of history undoubtedly owe a debt of gratitude to men like T. R. Batten who forced this realisation on the educational authorities.

Unfortunately, I am afraid, a close analysis of the details of the syllabus cannot but show that it is not, in fact, what its title suggests it is. And I believe it particularly desirable to offer criticism of this syllabus, as it was, I understand, put into operation in an experimental fashion, and as its authors have made provision for its reconsideration¹.

First, at the risk of tedium to those who know it well, I should like to summarise the subject-matter prescribed for this syllabus. It is divided (as are the examination papers based on it) into four sections² as follows:—

1. It may be relevant here to point out that I have not taught this syllabus myself. I am, however, engaged in the teaching of African history to freshmen at the University College, Ibadan, and in addition to discussing the syllabus with a number of secondary school teachers, I did, in 1956, carry out an official inspection of the teaching of it in two schools on behalf of the Western Region Ministry of Education.
2. There is, in fact an additional introductory section in the syllabus, but this is not examinable.

(1). "The European Background". This comprises a treatment of European expansion overseas before the 19th century, with special reference to Africa and the New World.

(2). "The British Background". By this is meant an analysis of the British constitution, together with a very general account of British imperial activity overseas.

(3). "History of British Tropical Africa". Under this head we have a general treatment of tropical Africa before the 19th century, followed by the history of "colonisation" there during the 19th century, and a more specialized treatment of post-Partition British West Africa, British East Africa or British Central Africa (according to the particular interest of students in the territory where the examination is taken).

(4). "Islamic History". Here is prescribed a general treatment of the rise and expansion of Islam down to 1258 A.D., followed by a more specialised treatment of the spread of Islam in the Western and Central Sudan.

Perhaps the first thing which is impressive about the details of this syllabus is their arrangement by topics rather than chronologically. The theory behind this arrangement appears to be that present day tropical African society is the product of a number of historical streams of human activity. There are the general European stream, the specifically British stream, and the Islamic stream. This is a very interesting approach, but it is open to criticism from several directions.

First, for example, there is an important difficulty which arises directly out of the separation of the subject into topics in the way described. Presumably, if the story of tropical Africa as it is here set out is not to be mutilated, *all* sections of the syllabus must be taught. But it is not at all clear how far if at all section (4) is to be integrated with the rest, for students may pass the examination without answering questions on this section. Those who do answer questions on it do not need to answer questions on any other section. But it is, I think, clear that historical situations cannot really be split up in this way and any suggestion that they can is liable to give the student a completely wrong idea of the nature of history. No society is produced by the mere mechanical juxtaposition of different streams of history. Rather are societies formed by the organic integration of such streams into total historical situations which unfold one after another. And it is this very process of integration and the resulting total historical development which must be the main object of study, for so far as the story of the *development of society* is concerned, no one 'stream' has any significance *on its own*: (unless it can be shown that any one stream completely determines

1. All quotations here are from West African School Certificate Regulations, 1956, p.18, as amended by West African Examinations Council Circular SCN4 (56)

the complexion of society, and it is not clear how this *can* be shown in connection with tropical Africa¹).

In practice the force of this difficulty is that even where the whole syllabus is taught, students may have to work for as long as two years without being able to grasp the significance of what they are doing. For it is only at the end of section (3) and, to a certain extent, at the end of section (4) that this question of integration (i.e. the description of actual historical situations in tropical Africa) is dealt with.

Even, however, if we could accept the view of African history as a collection of various threads bound together in a more or less unexplained fashion, we should at least require that *all* the threads be presented for study. But at least two very important ones are missing from the subject matter of this syllabus. First, there is what might be called the "19th century European Background" as represented in the story of the Industrial Revolution and international relations in Europe. Both these streams of history have had an enormous impact on tropical Africa, and should therefore merit some study if a balanced understanding of modern society in tropical Africa is to be achieved.² Secondly, and this is of extreme importance, there is the "African Background".

The "African" stream of history in the development of tropical Africa does appear to receive *some* treatment in the syllabus: in that part of section (3) which deals with Africa before the 19th century, and in that part of section (4) which deals with Islam in the Western and Central Sudan. But in this part of section (3) the only specifically African topic prescribed is the internal slave trade, and in section (4) attention is confined to about a quarter of the total area of tropical Africa only. Surely this treatment is partial and ineffective in the extreme. The defence might be made here, of course, that not enough is known about this African background to warrant the inclusion of a section on it in the syllabus.³ But this is a view which cannot really be accepted nowadays, and, in fact, so far as tropical Africa since the end of the eighteenth century is concerned, the teaching problem is not lack of material on African activities, but mass of material as yet unsummarised in general text-book form.⁴ Even where there are gaps in our knowledge, and in the

1. The power of the Islamic 'stream' may, of course, amount to this, but, clearly, only for certain periods and in certain limited areas of tropical Africa.

2. Originally there was a treatment of the Industrial Revolution in this syllabus. But this was for some reason struck out at the end of 1956.

3. e.g. J. D. Fage, *Introduction to the History of West Africa* (CUP, 1955), p. x. This text-book was especially written for this syllabus.

4. It may be relevant to note here that in 1956 the University of London, recognising the mass of material available, approved an honours degree syllabus for the University College, Ibadan, on the history of Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries. Many of the topics treated in this syllabus are, of course, concerned exclusively with the activities of Africans.

earlier story of tropical Africa there are considerable gaps, this must not be concealed from the student. And on no account must it be suggested to him (as I am afraid it is unintentionally suggested to him in this syllabus) that the specifically African part of his history is unimportant because it is to a certain extent unrecorded.

These considerations lead me to examine exactly how the story of those influences working in tropical Africa which are of non-African origin is treated in the syllabus. And here it is, I think, that we come upon the basic misconception which underlies the whole of this syllabus. The form the treatment of the 'foreign' influences takes is generally that of a detailed study of the origins and development of these influences *outside* tropical Africa (and often outside any part of Africa) and before they are exerted on that region. This is immediately noticeable in sections (1) and (2) of the syllabus where tropical Africa is, generally speaking, hardly mentioned, and I do not really think I need comment on this further. But it is also apparent in section (4). Islam, as is well known, has been exerting its influence in tropical Africa continuously for at least the last nine hundred years (in the eastern Sudan for considerably longer), and yet nearly two thirds of section (4)¹ are devoted to the rise and expansion of Islam in the Middle East and outside of Africa entirely, and do not contain any indication that during the period studied Islam was in fact, spreading into tropical Africa.² Now this approach to Islamic history is, of course, a perfectly legitimate one, if the main object of study is the rise of Islam in the Middle East. A very good case could, moreover, be made for such a study anywhere. The rise of Islam in the Middle East is a subject of universal interest, and I personally believe that it should be taught much more widely in secondary schools than in fact it is. But when it is taught it must be taught in a syllabus where it is the main object of study, for otherwise justice will not be done to it. On no account should it be bundled into a syllabus in which the main object of study is something else, such as the development of tropical Africa.

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1. That is: according to the distribution of questions in a specimen examination paper circulated by the West African Examinations Council.
 2. Thus the syllabus contains the instruction that the story of the Muslims in North Africa should only be treated "in brief outline", not, presumably because this story has nothing to do with the spread of Islam into tropical Africa, but because it is off the track of Islam in the Middle East. It is here worth noting that the text-book which is now being used in connection with the greater part of section (4) of the Tropical Africa syllabus is: Hiskett & Awad, *The Story of the Arabs* (Longmans, 1957). This very important little book, however, is, in fact, an attempt to present the story of the Arabs and Islam in the Middle East down to 1258 in a general fashion for English-speaking Muslims. I believe that it may prove very valuable for its purpose which is an important one. But in it tropical Africa is mentioned, I think, on only three out of 162 pages of text. North Africa is mentioned on some 20 pages dispersed throughout the book, but from this it is not possible to reconstruct the history of Islam in North Africa as a connected story

One comes to the heart of this problem, it seems to me, by asking how, in the story of tropical Africa, one should treat an important influence of non-African origin. The misconception underlying such treatment in this syllabus may well, I think, be the idea that the importance of such an influence is to be indicated by an intensive study of its origins outside Africa, while, in fact, the importance of an influence of foreign origin can *only* be indicated by an intensive study of the *effect* of the influence on the society concerned. On this view, which I do not believe is assailable in logic, a great deal of the material in this syllabus (though undoubtedly valuable for other purposes) must be counted as irrelevant to the object of study. Taught as it stands, it is, I think, likely to give a student a quite erroneous idea of how tropical Africa has become what it is today.

Suggestions for an alternative syllabus

If then, none of the syllabuses at present available properly fulfil the purpose of helping Nigerian students to understand how the society in which they live has become what it is today, can one which would achieve this purpose be suggested?

The field of study in any syllabus would clearly have to be African, for the reason that Nigerians and Nigerian society of the present day are, in so far as their nature is historically determined, the products of historical processes which have been going on in Africa since the beginning of human activity there. It is these processes and nothing else which would be studied throughout and as completely as possible. Just how wide, however, the field of study within Africa should be is an important question, and I wish to draw attention to certain considerations connected with it.

First, I suggest that the conception of *tropical* Africa as a field of study is not a logical one. This conception is borrowed from geography, and only by chance can have any significance for history. Certainly $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}\text{N}$. is very near to the ancient border of Egypt, and this, I suppose, is to a certain extent an historical frontier. But elsewhere this line has very little historical significance, and a restriction of study behind it makes nonsense of such important topics as the trans-Saharan trade and the spread of Islam into the Sudan belt. A much more significant historical frontier north of the equator would run along the northern edge of the Abyssinian mountains, the Nile swamps, and the tropical forest westwards to the Atlantic coast. $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}\text{S}$. is equally meaningless, for restriction of study behind it also makes nonsense of many of the movements in southern African history.

The question of importance to the students must be kept firmly in mind, and there seems to be quite a good argument for giving them the opportunity of studying the whole of the continent, in so far as this is possible. Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the numerous changes which are going on in Africa at the present time is the way in which so many of them tend in the direction of breaking

down those frontiers which were established as a result of the 19th century Partition, obscuring even the more ancient divisions of the continent, and altering the position of Africa in relation to the outside world. I refer to such changes as the attenuation of European imperial control, the rapid improvement of communications within the continent, the spread of western European type education, the more and more intensive exploitation of natural resources, and the resultant emergence of specifically African problems, the nature of which by far transcends the old internal divisions, and increasingly differentiates Africa as a whole from the rest of the world. It is noteworthy in this connection, for example, that the newly independent states of Africa (particularly Egypt, the Sudanese Republic and Ghana) are recognising that for the future their foreign policy must be directed towards the rest of Africa in a way which was not possible for them when they were under European control. But perhaps an even more striking measure of this new situation from our point of view at the moment can be seen in the undoubted fact that an educated Nigerian cannot *afford* nowadays to be ignorant of such things as the French plans for the industrialisation of the Sahara or the racial conflict in South Africa. And I think it reasonable to suggest that he should, while in secondary school, be given the opportunity of seeing these modern developments in as correct an historical perspective as is possible within the practical limits of teaching.

Should any specialisation at all within the field of African history be thought desirable for Nigerian students in the future, I see no reason why, in the long run, it should not be made possible for them to take Nigerian and African history in much the same way as English students take English and European history and French students take French and European history.

With regard to the problem of selecting a *period* from African history, we must, I think, recognise at once that certainly in the southern half of the continent there are vast areas about which we at present know very little indeed up to the end of the 18th century. This should not however prevent a student from studying the rest of Africa before the 19th century.¹ Alternatively a syllabus on Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries would undoubtedly be valuable. Here, as I have already suggested, there would be no problem of scarcity of material. Whatever period the course covers, however, it is, I think, important that the actual teaching of it should not be spread over more than two years at the very most. I feel that freedom to experiment with different courses in non-school certificate

1. It may be of interest to note that an attempt is already being made in the course for the Preliminary Examination in Arts at the University College, Ibadan, to present the story of the northern half of Africa from the Arab invasion onwards. The level at which this is taught is that of the second or higher school certificate.

classes is an essential condition for the healthy development of history teaching in Nigerian secondary schools.¹

Finally, when the period is chosen there remains the problem of ensuring that the syllabus does not deteriorate into a 'non-African influence' one. It must be made very clear that it is the history of Africa that is being studied. This must not mean, of course, that no importance should be attached to the influences of non-African origin which have been brought to bear on the continent in the past. Where these influences are important in the history of Africa they must without any question be given the prominence to which they are entitled. But this prominence rightly consists in a detailed explanation of the effect of these influences on human society in Africa, besides which any explanation of the non-African origin of these influences (and some such explanation of course, must be given) must be regarded as introductory matter only. It may be worth noting that this approach is already in use in Pakistan in connection with the treatment of the history of the Indian-sub-continent,² and there seems to be no real reason at all why it should not be used for the history of Africa.

This paper, with its plea for the provision of a school certificate syllabus specifically on African history approached from the point of view I have suggested, is in the nature of a preliminary survey. It is clear that much thought would have to go into the working out of such a syllabus.³ Certain external difficulties might also stand in the way of its introduction (not the least of which would possibly be the vested educational interest which is rapidly developing in the Development of Tropical Africa syllabus as it stands). But I do believe that a real educational problem of prime importance is involved here, and that it is the business of history teachers in Nigerian secondary schools at least to consider, whether the "Development of Tropical Africa" syllabus which they now have does not in fact urgently require the reconsideration of which its authors thought it might stand in need.

Mr. H. F. C. Smith is the Hon. Secretary of the Society and was at one time Chairman of the History Panel of the Sudan Examinations Council.

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1. A serious defect in the Development of Tropical Africa syllabus which I have not discussed here is that it takes four years to teach the examinable part of it completely. This raises important difficulties of examination which I do not wish to go into here, and it also make it quite unnecessary for teachers to use their initiative in deciding what to teach.
 2. Here, for example, the treatment of the rise of Islam in India begins with the Arab conquest of Sind, and thence proceeds in great detail. The early expansion of Islam in the Middle East, on the other hand, is treated in brief outline only in this syllabus.
 3. There is, of course, the problem of writing text-books for it. But this, I feel, is an administrative difficulty involving little more than questions of time and opportunity. And I do not think that any difficulty in this respect should prevent us from stating very clearly what we think desirable, and working towards its achievement.

THE TEACHING OF ISLAMIC HISTORY IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: PROBLEMS & APPROACHES

by

M. HISKETT

THE TEACHING of Islamic History in Nigeria is no new development. In the Northern Territories in particular there have always been educators who have urged the claims of this subject. Its recent adoption as a School Certificate subject comes as an official recognition of its importance to Secondary Education in Nigeria today.

The primary justification for including Islamic History as a general school subject rests on the principle that all history teaching should be related to the society and area in which the pupils live. This does not mean of course that the teaching of other alien history is not equally valuable: most would agree however that the pupil should know his own history first, and for this reason it is doubtful whether we have been justified in teaching Nigerian Muslim boys the history of Greece and Rome; the history of Europe; or even the history of the British Empire without first having given them some account of the civilisation of the medieval Muslim World. Yet such a state of affairs has prevailed in the past, largely owing to the influence of examination syllabi based on the English School Certificate: the adoption of Islamic History in the West African School Certificate syllabus is therefore the logical way to set this right.

There is another, more cogent reason for teaching the subject at the present time. The Muslim World is in a state of transition; the impact of modernism and the need to reconcile new ideas with the traditions of the past poses great problems; the need is for synthesis, and the process is inevitably difficult. The generation of Nigerians now growing up will have to think their way through these problems; they will be better equipped to do so if they have a balanced understanding of their own past. I say "balanced" advisedly, because if they do not learn Islamic History in the schools, they will pick it up in the market place, and such popular history can, as I have found among my own students, be a serious hindrance to the growth of reason and judgment.

Problems of teaching

The teaching of Islamic History is not, unfortunately, entirely straightforward. There are problems which it is as well we should recognise frankly and attempt to solve. The first is the religious interpretation of the Muslim as opposed to the secular outlook of the Western historian. This arises particularly when dealing with the life of the Prophet, and there is no doubt that a non-Muslim, unless he is very well informed concerning the Muslim viewpoint, is apt to

get into difficulties. I personally have found that a straightforward account of Muhammed's life, confining oneself to the facts and chronology which are universally accepted by Muslim and non-Muslim alike gives rise to no difficulty: nevertheless it is best that Muslims should be taught the life of the Prophet by a Muslim. This is seldom difficult to arrange, as there is usually a Muslim member of the staff who is both willing and qualified to help in this way. From the death of the Prophet onwards there are few difficulties, providing always that the students are convinced from the outset of the teacher's complete impartiality.

There are of course, other good reasons why the subject should be taught, wherever possible, by Muslims; particularly the fact that few expatriate teachers know Arabic, and this is undoubtedly a hindrance to the complete understanding of Islamic History. While there is no shortage of Muslims who are well-versed in their own history, this alone is not a sufficient qualification for teaching the subject up to School Certificate standard. To do this effectively the teacher must have an excellent command of English, and must have a background of training in general history, and in historical method. In other words he must be a history graduate. Few Nigerians, at least in the North, have this qualification, and therefore for some years to come, the subject will have to be taught, at secondary level, by expatriates. That this is so underlines the need to train Nigerians to specialise in Islamic history; and this requires facilities at university level both for first degree work, and for further research.

Syllabus

Most would agree that at Primary School level it is not desirable to embark on a formal syllabus. Chronology means little to young children, and the best approach is the "patch" method, where the teacher takes outstanding and dramatic events, and treats them in story fashion. No attempt is made to teach dates, although the teacher will, of course, deal with the episodes in their correct order. Thus the children will acquire a series of landmarks around which their subsequent knowledge can grow.

The West African Examinations Council syllabus will be the back-bone of secondary school work. But this syllabus represents the minimum required for examination purposes, and the field of study covered in the course of secondary school work should be much wider. The syllabus should be supplemented by the study of several "lines of development" or "parallel themes". There are many such themes, and the following examples may appeal to the varied tastes of teachers.

- (1) The relations between Islam and Byzantium.
- (2) The interplay of Byzantine, Islamic, and Crusading history.
- (3) The development of Islamic intellectual life.
- (4) Muslim contributions to the Renaissance.
- (5) History of Islamic literature.
- (6) Arabian Music.

One of the great problems in drawing up a syllabus of Islamic History is to maintain chronological unity. The subject is of vast extent. In any one century activity may extend from the Indus to the Atlantic coast of Spain; from the southern Sahara to the Caucasus. It is therefore advisable, from time to time, to drop what one may term the longitudinal approach to chronology, and work horizontally. Hazard and Cooke's *Atlas of Islamic History*¹ is most useful for this purpose; also I hope, the time chart at the back of *The Story of the Arabs*² by myself and Sheikh Awad.

The History of Islam in the West and Central Sudan is part of the main School Certificate Islamic History Syllabus; it is however, a course within a course, and deserves special mention. Once again the W.A.E.C. syllabus should be regarded as a minimum. The student should know something of North African and Sudanese pre-history, and rather more of the pre-Islamic civilisations in the area. The course should be closely related at all stages to the history of North Africa and Egypt. Emphasis on geographical factors is important, and it should be a continuous aim to show the unity, cultural, religious, political, and economic, between the Sudan and the surrounding Islamic countries. A particularly interesting and useful "line of development" which can run parallel to the main course is to trace the growth of knowledge concerning the Sudan. This takes us from the earliest Arab geographers down to Mungo Park and Heinrich Barth.

It is of course not intended that a syllabus such as I have suggested should take the place of history already taught in our schools. For many years to come Islamic History at secondary school level will be a subject for specialisation closely related to an interest in Arabic. It is therefore probable that it will be taken by "sets" rather than by whole classes, and the point at which the specialisation will begin will be determined by individual circumstances in each school. What is important is that, in the Muslim areas, some place should be found for Islamic History in the general history syllabus, so that all pupils, whether they finally specialise or not, will have an adequate knowledge of the subject.

Method

Teaching method as applied to Islamic History is limited by two factors. The first is the lack of suitable textbooks; and to this I shall be referring later. The second is the lack of prepared visual aids. Islamic history is a rare subject; therefore we do not have the wealth of film-strips, wall pictures, and historical models which are available for the more conventional periods. Nevertheless there are certain useful aids. *Pictorial Education*, published by Evans, has from time to time, illustrations of crusading history,

1. Princetown U. P. 1952

2. Longmans 1957

and these are often most useful for our period. Phillip and Tacey publish a cellograph map of the Islamic World which is invaluable; while to Hazard and Cooke's *Atlas of Islamic History* I have already referred.

At secondary level history teaching must, I believe, be based very largely on the oral method, particularly in Islamic history where the other aids are so limited.

In my own teaching I have dealt mainly with students at teacher training level; but the difference between them and a School Certificate class is not great, and it may be useful if I outline the method which I have found effective. It is a very orthodox method, and will come as no revelation.

I treat the syllabus mainly chronologically, but break off from time to time to take a horizontal cross-section. First I set a period to be studied in two or more textbooks; I then treat the period in class. Sometimes I lecture; sometimes I discuss: I do not subscribe to the view that lecturing must always be bad at anything less than university level. At frequent intervals during discussion or lecture we stop and make notes. This usually takes the form of a synopsis, dictated by me and written down by the students. At other times I put main headings on the blackboard, and the class expand them as they wish. This of course, is a more advanced stage and I feel that one must accept the inevitability of dictated notes in the early stages; but the aim should be to teach students how to make their own notes as soon as possible. Even then the teacher will usually find it necessary to lay down "tram lines".

When the course has been covered in this fashion, we start to write essays. I have found it quite useless to plunge students straight into essay work. The results are invariably rambling, confused, full of irrelevant detail, and far too long. We therefore start by constructing skeleton essays. This is done by the teacher and class together, by the Socratic method. We first decide on the number of paragraphs to be devoted to the subject; we then specify a general theme for each paragraph; finally the paragraphs are broken down into sub-heads, and the essay is then built round this framework. As a progression on this students write their own essays around a skeleton previously drawn up in class. Finally they are left to carry out the whole process individually. But for every full essay that is written, I insist on the making up of several skeletons on alternative themes. Usually I split the class into three sections, and give each a different essay subject. Each section writes its own essay in full, and the others in skeleton. I find this not only useful practice in orderly thinking, but also an excellent means of revision.

One point of detail is worthy of note: Arabic names present great difficulty even to students who know Arabic; when they are disguised by transliteration into Roman script, they are even more difficult. It is therefore most important that all place names and

proper names which occur in the lesson should first be written up in large clear print on the blackboard. As the teacher comes to each name, so he should point to it, and the class should write it down. This is the only way to avoid distorted spellings of names which to the students often sound like nonsense syllables.

Finally project work. My experience of project work has been that it requires a degree of initiative and a general background of scholarship which very few of my students possess. Few of them have ever had the opportunity of working independently; few have enjoyed the library facilities which are essential to individual research. It is impossible, in most cases, to make up this deficiency in the time available. What is important therefore is that all secondary schools should have first class library facilities for history; and that pupils should be taught how to use these facilities from the beginning of their secondary school career. When this becomes general it will be possible to do really effective project work at sixth form and teacher training level.

Textbooks

Textbooks present a difficult problem. Although there is no shortage of works on Islamic history, yet because the subject is so seldom studied below university level, few suitable textbooks exist. Most of what has been written is on a highly academic level and makes difficult reading for boys; particularly boys whose mother tongue is not English. Furthermore, the approach to Islamic studies of an earlier generation of scholars was often that of the comparative theologian as well as that of the historian. Many of these scholars were also Hebreists whose interest in Arabic and Islam arose out of their Old Testament studies. In some cases, though by no means in all, one must be prepared for some degree of bias in their works. Non-Muslims must be prepared to recognise this; and to discount it. Muslims must see it simply as a stage in the development of historical studies, and must not be offended by it. In neither case should it be allowed to obscure the very real contribution to knowledge which these earlier scholars have made. In more recent scholars such as Brockelmann, Gibb, Lewis, Hitti and Guillaume one will find the complete objectivity of the scientific historian.

A very adequate reading list is published together with the W. A. E. C. syllabus for Islamic History. Here I merely wish to draw attention to what I consider the basic works for secondary school use.

Brockelmann's *History of the Islamic Peoples*¹ is a standard work, and gives an orthodox account of Islamic history. But it is difficult because, as is so often the case with works by German scholars, every word is full of meaning, and it requires considerable concen-

1. London 1949

tration to follow it. I have found that it is sometimes too intense for all but the brightest students.

Lewis, *The Arabs in History*¹ is a most valuable work; the approach is analytical, but though it is highly scholarly the English is seldom too difficult, and I have found that my students make good use of it.

There are two works by Professor Hitti: his large work *The History of the Arabs*²; and a smaller digest *The Arabs*³. It is possible to criticise *The History of the Arabs* on the grounds that there are certain important omissions; also that the style of the English is not always pleasing. Nevertheless the book is indispensable, particularly as a first reference book. The chapters on cultural and social life in medieval Islam are particularly useful. *The Arabs* is very brief, but is useful as a first introduction to the subject.

Sir H. A. R. Gibb's *Mohammedanism*⁴ is in my view one of the best general interpretations of Islam which has been done by a European scholar.

The basic reference work for Islamic History is the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. This is a large work in four volumes and a supplement, and covers the whole field of Islamic studies. It is of course difficult, and it would be unrealistic to expect students below university standard to use it independently. But there has recently been published *The Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, in one manageable volume. This comprises a selection of the more important articles and is useful not only for the material it contains, but also as a means of teaching the proper use of reference works. Other important reference works which no doubt already exist in many libraries are *The Cambridge Medieval History* and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, both of which contain a good deal of material on Islam. Among modern Arabic works *Nur al-Yaqin*⁵ and *Hayyat-Muhammed*⁶ should certainly be read.

It is always a moot point as to whether, and to what extent, students below university level should read directly from sources. I feel that provided too much is not expected it is a useful exercise and one which can add reality to the study of history. But the teacher must always be aware of a tendency to accept uncritically all that is read: therefore it is necessary, before reading from the source, to explain its nature; and point out its errors and bias. I recommend that secondary school students should read something from the classical biographies of the prophet such as Ibn Hisham (of whose work an excellent English translation has recently been

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1. London 1950
 2. Macmillan 1943
 3. London 1948
 4. O. U. P. 1949
 5. Muhammed al-Khudari (Cairo 1953).
 6. Muhammed Hussain Haykal (Cairo 1955).

published by Professor Guillaume¹); al-Wakidi; Tabari and so on. They should also read representative passages from Ibn Khaldun; selections from *Kitab al-Aghani*; from Ibn-Tiqtaqas *al-Fakhri* (English translation by C. E. J. Whitting)², and also from the *Arabian Nights* (Burton's translation). It should be possible to co-operate here with the Arabic teacher, who may well be willing to use these works in his literature and translation periods.

Textbooks for the history of Islam in the West and Central Sudan present an even greater problem. We have *Caravans of the Old Sahara*³ by Bovill; *The Muhammedan Emirates of Nigeria*⁴ by Hogben; Dr. Fage's *Introduction to the History of West Africa*⁵; and Sir Alan Burns' *History of Nigeria*.⁶ Dr. Fage's work, and that of Sir Alan Burns deal largely with the South, and with coastal history. They deal with the Saharan Empires and the Muhammedan North only in outline, although both, particularly Dr. Fage's book, are most useful as an introduction. *Caravans of the Old Sahara* is also useful, but it is far from complete; nevertheless it will no doubt serve as the main textbook for this period. Hogben's work is most valuable, particularly for the history of the Hausa states, and their Fulani successors. Sir Richmond Palmer's very valuable contributions⁷ concern mainly Bornu, and are works for the scholar, not for the student. The really comprehensive works on the period have of course, been written in French and German, and not in English. The teacher must use what is available, and must supplement this with his own notes. He will have to read something of North African history, and Egyptian history. He will then have to study the Saharan empires. Finally he will have to study the history of Hausa, Bornu, and the Fulani conquest in specialist works. He will then have to bring all this together for himself, and make of it a course of study for his students.

As far as the history of Islam in the Sudan is concerned, I do not feel that there is much to be gained by students reading sources. As-Sa'dis *Tarikh as-Soudan*⁸ is a work from which only a trained historian can extract anything of value; the same applies to the MSS of the Fulani period, and similar native sources. But I do strongly recommend that students be encouraged to read the medieval Arab geographers, particularly Ibn-Battutah. An excellent selection

1. O. U. P. 1955

2. London 1947

3. O. U. P. 1933

4. O. U. P. 1930

5. C. U. P. 1955

6. Allen & Unwin 1951

7. Particularly *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan* (Lond. 1936) and *Sudanese Memoirs* (Lagos 1928)

8. Paris 1900.

from Ibn-Battutah has recently been done in English by Sir H. A. R. Gibb¹ and it includes the complete account of his travel in the Sudan. It is a most lively and vivid account, and one with which all students should be familiar.

In conclusion I should like to draw attention to a matter which must be very much the concern of the society. There is, in the library of this university college, and elsewhere in the country, particularly in the North, a great deal of historical source material. I refer to the Arabic MSS of the Fulani period; and to certain other MSS in Arabic, Hausa and Fulani which relate to the history of Nigeria. The MSS which are already preserved in the University Library have been listed by Mr. Kensdale in his most valuable catalogue.² While the major works are by now fairly well known, the great bulk of this material has yet to be studied. I believe that much information is still to be obtained from these MSS and our teaching of the history of Islam in the Sudan can never be complete until they have been worked over, and made available to scholarship. What is initially required is that the texts should be edited and translated; later critical studies can be carried out. There is no doubt that this Society can play a most important part in promoting such research.

Mr. M. Hiskett, is the Vice-Principal of the School for Arabic Studies, Kano.

1. Routledge, Kegan Paul 1953.

2. *A Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts preserved in the University Library, Ibadan, Nigeria.* Ibadan U. P. 1955 (3 fascicules)

TEXTBOOKS AND THE TEACHING OF AFRICAN HISTORY IN NIGERIA

by

R. E. O. AKPOFURE

A TEXTBOOK is primarily an encyclopaedia of fact—i.e. the raw material from which the student draws his knowledge. But the history textbook does much more than merely convey a body of facts—for this is only its immediate purpose. It has a deeper function and an ultimate significance for the student: to make him into an historian.

The process is twofold: (a) it creates a type of historical opinion in the student's mind; (b) it helps him to form, through his own study, a subconscious process of thought—an attitude of mind derived from the lessons of cause and effect. These functions though subconscious, are the true measure of the ultimate value of the textbook. We do not become good historians simply by what we are able to regurgitate in examinations. No doubt that is important, but it is rather our historical sentiments which are of lasting value. And these are moulded chiefly by the textbooks we have used. In the textbook we honour the heroes and castigate "the villains of the piece." The textbook shows us vivid pictures of obstinate Charles Stuart of England and his mischievous parliaments; of dazzling Louis Soleil grandly wining and warring; or of Mungo Park alone in darkest Africa, barbarously done to death amidst the rapids of Boussa! It is from these vivid images that the schoolboy forms a historical kaleidoscope which he may never have cause to re-examine.

There seem to me to be three broad stages in the use of history textbooks. There is the primary stage corresponding to the primary and early middle schools; there is the secondary stage—corresponding to the upper middle secondary and teacher training schools; and there is finally the higher post-secondary and university stage. The first is simply the fairy story period, and history is merely story telling. The second period is chiefly dominated by the shadow of the examination, and the textbook is simply the magic key which opens the door to success. In the final period, the history book ceases to be a "textbook". It becomes the object of selective and cautious examination. It is no longer mopped up from cover to cover. It is chiefly then a set of facts and opinions, and in its pages, the author now makes his personal appearance before the student, almost for the first time.

For the average schoolboy the first and third stages are relatively unimportant. But it is the second stage—i.e. the secondary school—which provides the main body of the historically-conscious public in this country today. This is the most impressionable period of the

schoolboy's life—and therefore, the pictures and images created by both textbook and teacher have greater permanence and greater importance. With them he is launched from school into the general stream of public opinion on history and historical characters—whether foreign or national history—himself a direct product of his school history textbook. In other words, his history is made at school unless he pursues its study to a higher stage.

The good teacher is supposed to prevent the domination of the textbook. He is supposed to draw on living experience as well. In practice, he usually teaches in, rather than from the textbook and the better the textbook, the more it becomes the deity of the history lesson at whose altar both teacher and pupils worship.

Textbooks and their content

It is obviously impossible to discuss textbooks without some reference to the syllabuses which they are designed to cover. Here I am giving particular attention to textbooks and syllabuses in secondary schools.

Three main fields of history are covered by these syllabuses. The first consists of the history of Britain and Europe (mediaeval and modern) in a world setting; the second covers in more detail, modern Britain and Europe to the present day; the third field is made up of the history of modern Africa and the British Empire and Commonwealth. A brief history of the ancient classical world provides the foundation of each field.

School Certificate syllabuses in the schools are confined to (a) Modern Britain and Europe or (b) the British Empire and Commonwealth. The Higher School Certificate examination covers Modern British and European history including a number of "special subjects" one of which is entitled "Great Britain and Africa". So far, no school seems to have adopted the alternative African history syllabus for the school certificate, proposed by the West African Examinations Council. The reasons for this I shall discuss later.

There is naturally, a wide variation from school to school in the choice of textbooks; but below is a brief list of books in fairly general use:—

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Europe | (i) E.H. Dance—"Europe and the World" (series) |
| | (ii) Southgate—"A Textbook of Modern European History" |
| Britain | (i) Carter & Mears—"A History of Britain" (series) |
| Empire | (i) J. Williamson—"A short history of the British Empire and Commonwealth" |
| | (ii) S.R. Brett—"A short history of the British Empire and Commonwealth" |

- Africa
- (i) T.R. Batten—"Tropical Africa in World History" (series)
 - *(ii) K. Ingham—"Europe and Africa"
 - (iii) M. Potts—"A school history of Nigeria"
 - (iv) A. Burns—"A short history of Nigeria"
 - ** (v) M. Perham & J. Simmons—"African Discovery"
 - (vi) Howard & Plumb—"West African Explorers"
 - (vii) J. Fage—"Introduction to the history of West Africa"

In actual teaching procedure, the first year at school is occupied by ancient history; the second and third by either African or British and European history, or a combination of both. The fourth and fifth years are devoted to teaching for the school certificate (a) The British Empire and Commonwealth or (b) Britain and Europe. So far, the paper on "Development of Tropical Africa" has remained experimental, without being taught for the school certificate. It will be seen therefore, that what may be described as "serious teaching" is only applied to the foreign histories.

Three main reasons are generally given for what is admittedly an unsatisfactory provision in the curriculum. The first and most general is that there are no suitable books for the teaching of African history up to the school certificate level. While the books available are clearly insufficient, it is yet possible to teach from these, in spite of the fact that it means harder work and greater dependence on the teacher's ability. The second reason is that too few teachers are qualified enough to teach this field—presumably those who have taken a degree in it. There is the danger therefore, it is argued, that the continued teaching of it would depend on such a "specialist" continuing to be available in the school. On this score alone many schools hesitate to teach it at any level at all. If this difficulty is fundamental, it seems to me even more an argument for starting to teach it, as a step towards fulfilling the demand.

The third objection is that the material of African history at present shows too many unilluminable patches, and too little continuity. This seems to me to be undue exaggeration. The question of an author's selection and arrangement of his material is always open to debate. It would seem to me therefore, that at this stage such criticisms on the finer aspects of the subject need not deter us, even were it completely impossible to relate a continuous story of the development of modern Africa.

The real problem seems to me to be how to find and collect the relevant works of reference, and from these to fill in the background of the African historical scene. And this problem can be more easily solved than is often believed (see below).

* Books used sometimes as textbooks, sometimes as reference.

** Books used for reference only.

Au Ideal Textbook

We can hardly agree on what is an ideal textbook or indeed a 'suitable' textbook. Yet, we can at least agree that any history textbook should perform certain cardinal duties. First, it should provide the basic "facts" of history as far as they are known; secondly, it should present as real a picture—and as human—as possible; thirdly, it should be readable and maintain an ordered whole. These seem to me to be less disputable demands than the questions of interpretation, selection and arrangement, or the method of approach—whether social or political, or economic.

But in this country, certain special demands must be made on a history textbook—especially in the secondary schools and teacher training colleges. Perhaps the first is for a more scholastic and less partisan presentation of historical opinion. A good volume of the "facts" of African history must be rescued from facile conjecture and generalisation, and re-examined and re-interpreted in the light of better knowledge today.

The second demand is that a textbook should be written in meaningful language, i.e. language which uses more metaphor and illustration more familiar to the Nigerian schoolboy; or in other words, metaphor drawn from more familiar environment—and which therefore "rings a bell" in his mind. There is of course the question of his vocabulary range which is often small, but this is inherent in all bilingual education and seems to me to be secondary.

There is a third demand: that is, for the widening of the scope of existing textbooks to cover the African continent, in order to present an African history written in perspective and with a unity imposed at least by continental boundaries. In spite of differences of opinions—and there are many on the subject—there is a good case to be made for a textbook (or a series of textbooks) on the history of Africa.

A fourth and more urgent demand, however, exists chiefly in the schools—viz. the demand that historical material be more effectively presented by means of visual and other mental aids. This is essential to history teaching anywhere, but especially so in this country, so far removed from Britain and Europe, and those countries whose histories we teach. For example while the British or European schoolboy lives amongst them—such names as "Versailles", "Bristol City", "Tower of London", "Houses of Parliament"—all mean nothing but names to his Nigerian counterpart. The most effective means of filling in the unfamiliar background and establishing that important sympathetic relation between the subject matter and schoolboy is by the visual image. I think therefore that textbooks for use in Nigerian schools ought to give a special place to photographs and illustrations and other aids to mental assimilation. This is no plea for photograph album textbooks. Yet, wall maps and charts, political treaties, travel diaries and journals have a special value in the teaching of history in this

country. Foreign history teaching without them is merely so much talk and chalk. The whole problem of visual aids in teaching is a difficult one which requires considerable thought by all who teach history, for it is full of difficulties— some of them peculiar to the country at this stage of educational development.

New Textbooks and the real need

It is both impossible and undesirable in a paper of this type to list exhaustively the published works available. It is equally difficult to make a fair selection. It is sufficient therefore, to mention some overseas publishers who are giving more and more attention specifically to the needs of African schools.

Longman's, Green & Co. heads the list; the Oxford University and the Cambridge University Presses publish yearly catalogues of African school books, and quite recently, the Macmillan Publishing Co. have begun to explore possibilities. These publishers offer, as yet, only a limited choice, but this new tendency is worthy of investigation.

I must here observe that supply obviously depends on demand. Publishers will be more willing to publish if there appears to be a reasonable demand for their publications. The demand will grow if and when schools begin seriously to teach this field of history for the School and Higher School Certificates. Merely to teach it as the diversion of a year or two is of little worth; not to teach it at all seems to me to be playing the ostrich and the sand. It is unsound to teach a boy to understand the outside world while he wallows in ignorance of his immediate environment. At the Cambridge Conference of 1952 the view was generally endorsed that there was need for African men and women to know enough of the recent history of Africa to understand and develop their social, economic and constitutional life. The school is the obvious start. There is clearly then an insistent argument for teaching African history in our schools. Only then can the demand be created and widened; and only then can more and more publishers undertake to supply the needs of the schools, who would then know at first hand what those needs are. This involves a re-orientation of many school syllabuses and a re-definition of the aim of all history teaching in the schools.

In addition to the question of new school textbooks, there is a greater need for good school reference libraries, or reference sections of the school libraries. Such libraries would contain general historical literature and as wide a collection of published works as possible. They would provide reference for teachers and, with guidance, for the upper forms of the schools. There is still a great lack of good subject libraries in most schools in the country, and it is my belief that the provision of good libraries is the most urgent need of the moment. Fortunately, it is one which can be more readily met—given adequate funds—than is usually believed.

Many second-hand booksellers offer a wide selection of travel books, social studies and various works of reference. Such booksellers as Blackwell of Oxford and Foyles of London have a wide range of books commonly out of print; the former publish an "Africana" catalogue which teachers and collectors have found invaluable.

The question of reprinting old and valuable books in cheaper editions, is one which seems to be full of possibilities. Here would appear to be an undertaking which the Historical Society or a library organisation—supported by the government or voluntary bodies—could follow up. That the books available will be of varied quality, does not seem to me to be a hindrance to collection.

Textbooks and History in Nigeria

I would like to end by recalling some of the wider implications of history teaching in Nigeria today. The point was made earlier in this paper that the school textbook is the main agent in the creation of historical opinions among the general public today. It was also suggested that the historical images and impressions formed in the schoolboy's mind remain long with him—unless he pursues his historical studies further. The great majority today do not. The obvious inference is that it is essential to provide good textbooks. Many of those in use are outdated in interpretation, and sometimes in fact. I would go further to suggest that in the interest of historical truth, there is an urgent need for authoritative African opinion on all aspects of this continent's history. There is no doubt but that re-interpretation and evaluation stemming from within will be a valuable contribution towards an understanding of the history of Africa and modern African developments. This is of course a matter for personal initiative as well as opportunity.

I have made a plea for the teaching of African history chiefly because such history should be fundamental to all education in this country. This is no doubt obvious. It is my belief that the West African schoolboy's current reputation for being a memorising machine is a direct result of what material he has always had to learn. It is difficult to see how he can rhapsodize on the joys of fading autumn or the beauty of the snow-covered countryside—Christmas cards notwithstanding. He is, and always will be, compelled to take refuge in literal memorisation so long as he stays divorced from the environment which makes immediate meaning to him, in the content of his education. If he cannot establish an immediate sense of familiarity, then the material will never become really his own—and he will never really be educated.

There is no subtle attempt here to minimise the difficulties involved in teaching African history in our schools today. It is a plea for making a start in the face of odds, because the start has to be made. It is an attempt also to place its difficulties in a more correct perspective. Every textbook needs supplementing and adaptation to

the needs of every class. Textbooks on African history are no exception.

There is here a vicious circle of books and teachers. There is a great lack of books, as well as teachers qualified in the subject. Yet only by teaching African history can interest be roused in it in order to increase the supply of history teachers in this field as in others. My answer therefore is that the vicious circle must be broken somewhere, however inadequate our equipment for doing so. It is undoubtedly a sound investment to do so.

No one would deny that African history should form the basis of school history in this country. Nor would anyone deny that the present provision is unsatisfactory. The obvious conclusion is that something must be done. It is my belief that given a readiness to meet the difficulties, an open mind to welcome desirable innovations, and a reasonable sum of money—the problem of obtaining books in general, and school textbooks in particular, can be tackled with success—by both teachers, examiners and publishers.

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THE USE OF SOURCE MATERIAL IN THE TEACHING OF HISTORY

by

MISS N. LATHAM

MOST OF US today would agree with Trevelyan—"The older I get, the more I observe the tendencies and conditions of our later day, the more certain I become that history must be the basis of human (that is non-scientific) education in the future. Without some knowledge of history other doors will remain locked."

But history is a tremendous subject; it is the very stuff of life, going on around us now as it has for countless years in the past. It embraces all races and all creeds; all peoples from the highest to the lowest; all time from the first homo sapiens who walked upright on the earth to the jet-propelled aviator of the present day. Such a subject seems too vast for the understanding of immature minds. Yet just because it is so vast, so all-embracing, it is important as a school subject. One leading educationalist writes, "Once his schooldays are over not one boy in a hundred will ever again be brought into contact with chemical processes, or be compelled to make any physical calculation. The ordinary adult pays specialists to perform these operations for him, and as a rule is far too sensible to run the risk of doing them badly . . . It is different with the other departments of school studies. The youth may never again see a test-tube or a balance but he cannot fail to be brought into contact with men. His success in life will probably, will almost certainly depend upon the ease with which he observes both the written and spoken language and the inferences he draws from that. He will on countless occasions need to analyse documents (here, I would insert newspapers), to abstract from them and compare them, he will seldom be free from the necessity of inferring motives from actions and character from deeds and it is precisely to these classes of mental operations and to familiarity with these factors in human life that school history if properly conceived and the history lesson if properly conducted will introduce him."

But there lies the crux of the matter, "school history if properly conceived and the history lesson if properly conducted." There precisely is where the failure lies; that is why our critics maintain "that the average child leaves school with a confused mass of knowledge of historical facts and a hatred of the subject in which he has been forcibly fed with dates, opinions and theories which have not the remotest interest to him" and which are alien to his natural interests. As far as he is concerned it is "dead and pickled."

The first offender in making history dull is the teacher who should be a cultivated person capable of introducing his pupils to the richness and diversity, the memories and associations of the world

immediately around him. But the teacher, too, in his day was fed on the same dull textbooks with which he feeds his own pupils. Probably he had a flair for remembering dates, and an ability to explain cause and effect and so he went to college and 'did' history. Nor was his college course such as to make him an inspiring teacher. In all too many cases he read more and larger, duller and more detailed text-books, listened to many lectures, and immersed himself in monographs on a particular small section or period. After college, the difficulties of the teacher so often increase. There are still principals who think that all that is necessary to teach history is to be one chapter ahead of the class, and that the teacher's time is not being properly used if his programme is not filled up with supervision, games, school societies and the like. Few of them realise that the teacher of history who no longer has time to read and study history has ceased to be capable of teaching it.

The first task of the future teacher is to discover an awareness for the history around him; until he has discovered it he will never be able to teach history let alone teach it well. Until he has found the romance of history he will never be able to transmit that feeling to his pupils for school textbooks never did that. Until we find textbooks conscious of the romance of history the teacher must create it for his pupils himself. With the multiplicity of textbooks, monographs, and articles in learned magazines, all emphasising the scientific nature of the study we are moving further and further away from an awareness of the real nature of history—its humanity. A few historians who are themselves men of action still write with feeling but mostly we must go back to the original sources to bring life into our studies.

The next question is, what are the sources of history? There are the written sources, of course—books, papers, letters, diaries, household accounts, plans, pamphlets political and scurrilous, treaties and pictures; but there is also all the paraphernalia around us, from which the archaeologist can reconstruct the past—houses, towns, walls, caves, pots and pans, wheels, farming implements.

The teacher must look around him and learn to see the sources that are there—and few places are really without them. In Europe it is perhaps much easier, where great stone castles rearing up on rocky prominences, speak of local wars; where cathedrals and churches of stone and stained glass testify to the piety of the religious in times past; and manor houses of stone and wood show how people lived generations ago. But here there are evidences too; the walled cities of the North with their seven gates reminiscent of the walled cities of ancient Egypt; the caves, the hut circles and the rock gongs on Kufena; the stone implements still in use in the remoter parts of the country.

At bottom the appeal of history is imaginative. "In imagination we long to see our ancestors as they really were; going about their business and their pleasure. It is only the detailed study of the past that makes us feel that it is as real as the present."

It is only in source material that the historian-teacher can obtain this understanding and only by the same means that he can pass it on to the children he teaches. Many of these sources will be unsuitable for children as they stand but the wise teacher will over the years build up a collection of extracts which will be suitable for class use. Among the most easily obtainable source material are pictures, or in this country perhaps sculptures. Particularly valuable are pictures or sculptures of historical characters. Pictures of ordinary men and women of a period provide information on the costume and the like. These are important when dealing with the younger groups who always want to know "what they looked like".

Other sources which the teacher can collect are local traditions which often serve to illustrate locally the impact of great movements on the immediate life of the people. Though oral tradition is not completely accurate it is interesting to find out how often the main fact is true and how long the traditions survive. In a recent sociological survey by W. H. Williams on a remote village in northern England it was discovered on investigation that traditions of relationships going back six generations were entirely accurate, and that another regarding the family ownership of a farm went back over 150 years and again was correct. I have no doubt that similar traditions here would prove equally accurate could they be investigated. At last year's conference I remember hearing many references to Yoruba praise songs. It seemed to me then that these could be used to illustrate history lessons, and not only Yoruba history either. From the references and descriptions they appear to have had much resemblance in content and in purpose to the songs of the wandering minstrels of Mediaeval Europe. If that is so then this comparison would help a class to understand more easily what mediaeval minstrelsy was.

Further sources collected by the teacher will naturally be written ones culled from numerous books and MSS during the course of his own studies and investigations. For those who have the opportunity to visit England there are, of course, the vast resources of the P. R. O. but that is not essential since nowadays there are quantities of published sources like the Journals of the House of Commons available in most large libraries. The Hakluyt Society has for the last fifty years or more published documents of explorations from many sources, English, Spanish, Portuguese, many of which have particular interest here in West Africa. There are cheaper publications too, like the collection of documents illustrative of American history published by the Oxford University Press. One important source which is often forgotten is the literature contemporary to the period studied. For example, no history textbook and certainly no official document could describe a pre-reform election half as vividly as Dickens' Eatonswill election as visited by the Pickwick Club; while biographies like Churchill's on Marlborough and autobiographies like Amery's *My Political Life* are all rich mines of material.

We now come to consider how source material can best be used in the classroom. This is particularly important as the amount of such material which can be used is necessarily limited. Only a certain amount of such material can be introduced into textbooks, while on the other hand the time allotted to the teaching of history is short and most historical documents are long. No one uses visual or auditory aids all the time; no one device or apparatus is the complete answer to better or more valuable history teaching. There are useful books published, some of which can be used most effectively in the hands of the teacher, as for example L. F. Salzman's book *Sources of English History*. Others are intended for the use of the pupils, as is the series issued by Ginn and Co. and edited by C. B. Firth. In this series each textbook is accompanied by a source-book for the use of the children. These books have the merit of carrying suitable exercises with each chapter. The idea is excellent, though some of the material is a little difficult for the younger children. A more recent experiment is the picture source-book for the social history of the sixteenth century, produced by Molly Harrison of the Geffrye Museum. This is really an excellent production which might serve as a model for other efforts on similar lines. The illustrations are well chosen though they would be improved by the use of colour and the pictures made simple enough to be clear to the younger pupils. Even with these examples I still maintain that the best material is that selected by the teacher who knows his class and the subjects most likely to appeal to them.

One criticism will surely be that whereas there is no dearth of source material in England or indeed in Europe and America there is not so much easily available here in Africa. No doubt in future syllabuses will work outwards more than previously from an African background. Nevertheless, the secondary schools will always need to study other branches and periods in order that they may understand the factors underlying present-day world history, in the same way that the English children need to study American and Russian history. In this connection source material rightly comes into its own, for it must be extremely difficult for the African child with an environment so different, to believe in as persons, characters removed from him not only in time but also in race and background.

Although it may be argued that there is not a great deal of source material available for use here in West Africa, that much of the official material is tucked away in the P. R. O. or museums and libraries in England, it should be remembered that fifty years ago in England there was little opportunity for the teacher to investigate original sources for his own use or to find material for his teaching. Now, however, there are extensive collections open in most of the county towns, in the universities and public libraries. Here, too, a beginning has been made. The collection of Arabic documents at Ibadan is already well known. Writing in June 1955, Mr.

Kensdale said that there were 160 titles in the list of indigenous Arabic books collected; books written by such historical characters as Shehu Dan Fodio, Sultan of Sokoto, and his brother Abdullah Dan Fodio, the first Emir of Gwanda. There is an Arabic library at Kano and a small one in the Northern House of Assembly at Kaduna. Already a collection of Nigerian Archives exists and there are Museums at Jos, Benin, and Lagos. As more libraries are established and more archive departments and museums are opened the opportunities will be greater. There must also be a wealth of material buried in the archives of the provinces which in time will become available for the student and teacher. In one of the provincial archives there is, for example, a fascinating diary kept at the beginning of this century by a district head who was a slave raider and gun runner over the French border.

Before we go further in our discussion of the written sources for West African history consider some of the material sources that are to be observed in the country-side. There are stringed instruments in use still in the North very like those used in ancient Egypt; I have seen oval grinding stones the very image of those in use in stone age Britain and still in use among the bushmen of Australia. There is an excellent example of the inequality of development in various parts of the world and of how at different times and in different places man has been forced to use the same sort of materials found ready to hand. Look at the chain mail and the great swords used in the Salla time in Katsina and you are transported back eight hundred years to the Crusades. Indeed, report has it that some of the swords are actual Crusaders swords. Whether that is true or not I am not competent to judge, but the design, at least, appears authentic. Teachers here are lucky in that their pupils can see every stage of the development of transport from the headload to the aeroplane. For teaching the Industrial Revolution, all stages in the production of textiles can be traced, from the simple weaving of reed and grass mats; through the narrow hand loom to the textile factories. The mats are on sale in most markets; drive through almost any village around Kano late in the afternoon and the weavers are sitting in the shade of the mango tree plying their craft on the narrow hand loom. In the dry season on the roads around Kano and Katsina you may see the veiled Touaregs who figure so frequently in the writings of the trans-Saharan travellers of the middle ages. They still lead their string of camels as they did when they conducted their slave caravans to North Africa and Egypt. How frequently does the salt trade feature in these same writings. At Potiscum the desert salt is still on sale in the market. At Maiduguri one can still see the Shuwa Arabs riding the oxen, as did the people of Libya and Fezzan before the introduction of the camel in the Third Century A.D.

Probably the best use a teacher can make of written source material, particularly in the beginning, is to illustrate information

in the textbooks which is perhaps a little dull and incomprehensible to the class. Already there is a reasonable amount of such material not difficult of access, and in published form, not too expensive for the teacher to purchase for himself where the school library is deficient. Other material is of the kind which would be found in the library of any college and in any reasonably equipped secondary school.

One can take, for example, the first two chapters of Niven's *History of Nigeria* designed for use in the Middle Schools. The introduction, in summarizing the Christian and Muslim influences on West Africa compares the monastic rule of life with the Koranic. These might well be illustrated by reading to the class the Rule of St. Benedict and some extracts from the Koran describing the rules of good conduct. In Muslim areas, of course, the latter would not be necessary. The references to Portuguese exploration suggest extracts from Azurara and Cadamosto. In these and other Portuguese writings (which have been translated) there are references to the beginnings of the slave trade. Extracts from both Ibn Battuta and Leo Africanus are exceedingly useful on the trans-Saharan trade routes, as is also the letter of Antonio Malfante published in the Hakluyt Society's volume on Cadamosto. Both Leo Africanus, writing about 1520, and Richard Jobson, writing a century later, describe the Fulani herdsmen. The following example is from Jobson's book, the *Golden Trade*:—

“Being a tawny people and have a resemblance to those we call the Egyptians. . . Their profession is keeping cattle, some goats they have, but the herds they tend are beefs whereof they are abundantly stored.”

He also describes one aspect of the interior slave trade in the 17th century in his connections with the merchant Buckor Sano. For the eighteenth century there are any number of authorities which describe the other aspect of the slave trade, the coastal trade and the appalling misery of those wrenched from their homes for sale overseas.

Records of the earlier history of the Western Sudan are not lacking either. There are no doubt many documents in existence not yet available to the teacher or the ordinary student who has not the opportunity for research. Nevertheless published sources do exist. For example, Ibn Battuta tells us a good deal about Mansa Musa, and Leo Africanus of Kano in the time of Mohammed Kisoki.

Sir Richmond Palmer's collection of Arabic documents in his books *Bornu, Sahara and Sudan*, *Mai Idris of Bornu*, and the *Sudanese Memoirs* are also a mine of useful material. In addition, there are the many travel books of the eighteenth and nineteenth century explorers, like Laird and Oldfield, Lander, Barth and Baikie, all of which provide material not only for the study of European contacts with the interior but also for comments on the social and political organisation of the Africans before European control was established.

ed, and all of which are published though some are more difficult to find now that so many institutions are building up libraries of African History. New books are being published which will widen the scope. There is that delightful book of the life of an old Hausa woman *Baba of Karo*, interesting not only to Hausa pupils whose families will more and more desert the older forms of social order, but to pupils in other parts where the social background is quite different. Another book, *The Efik Traders of Calabar*, appears from the preview to contain some very useful material. The great trading companies are also beginning to publish their individual histories. These few references indicate that the task of illustrating Nigerian history from source material is not impossible even now for the teacher who has not access to a university library. A small collection of books will provide a great many useful illustrations.

Some writers exaggerate the difficulty of source material for younger children. Obviously constitutional documents, treaties, and the like are couched in language too technical for the immature student. But descriptions of places and persons, chroniclers' accounts of character and episodes are quite within the scope of the younger secondary school children and in fact are couched in language no more difficult than the average textbook simply because the chronicler was not usually a scholarly man, but a simple recorder of facts. Where it is possible to use a contemporary chronicle to describe a historical event it is more interesting to do so than to use the textbook. The chronicler's account is as biased as a modern newspaper, but provided the teacher points out the prejudices that is all to the good. Such an account could quite easily lead on to a lesson on finding out both sides of the question, and the difference in accounts given nowadays by newspapers of varying political outlook. Hakluyt's voyages, the personal accounts of Mungo Park and of Livingstone are far more interesting than the descriptions in the normal school book. Several of these can be purchased in the Everyman Edition quite cheaply.

This sort of material is of great use in exercises of comprehension and criticism. Take for example the following extract from Leo Africanus:—

"The great province of Kano standeth eastward of the river Niger about 500 miles. The greatest part of the inhabitants dwelling in villages are some of them herdsmen and others husbandmen, there groweth an abundance of corn and rice and of cotton. Also have they many deserts, and wild woody mountains containing many springs of water. In these woods grow plenty of wild citrons and lemons, which differ not much in taste from the best of all. In the midst of this province standeth a town called by the same name, the walls and houses whereof are built for the most part of a kind of chalk. The inhabitants are rich merchants and most civil people. Their king was in times past of great puissance and had mighty troops of horsemen at his command. But he hath since been constrained to

pay tribute unto the kings of Zegzeg and Casena. Afterwards Ischia, the king of Tombuto faining friendship unto the two aforesaid kings, treacherously slew them both. And he waged war against the king of Kano, who after a long siege he took, and compelled him to marry one of his daughters, restoring him again to his kingdom conditionally that he should pay unto him the third part of all his tribute and the said king of Tombuto hath some of his courtiers perpetually residing in Kano for the receipt thereof”.

A blank map could be provided on which the children might insert the towns of Zaria and Katsina as well as Kano. With the insertion of Kano they could be made to realise the inaccuracies of the writer. The trade routes across the Sahara and to the Nile valley would illustrate how the merchants traded. The route to Timbuktu would also appear. The class could answer questions on the articles of trade then and now in Kano and discuss the routes by which trade was and is carried on and the means of transport. Another interesting discussion could centre round the source of the horses which were bought. Other questions would deal with the later or earlier history of Kano and its relations with other neighbouring states.

Extracts from the more famous explorers of the Nile valley and of the Niger would provide useful historical mapping exercises particularly if they were combined with extracts from Ibn Battuta and Leo Africanus on the course of the Niger and its confusion with the Nile.

For the post Certificate of Education “O” level work, source material can be used not only as a source of information but also in exercises of comparison and criticism. Such exercises are beyond the powers of younger children. For example in a study of Nigerian history the proposed constitution should be studied in detail and compared with, say, the American Federal Constitution and the British unitary system. This could lead to comparisons between the powers of the American President and the British King on the one hand and the British Prime Minister on the other, the Nigerian Prime Minister and the relations with the British crown and the British government. This discussion might also lead on to one of the relative values of written and unwritten constitutions. Such questions are not beyond the powers of the average student in the VIth form who has been well taught lower down the school.

Another useful lesson which can be illustrated by the use of documents and sources is the lack of reasoned judgement apparent in even the most illustrious statesmen in times of high feeling. One can in this way show students how to withhold judgements or question the ravings of journalists in times of emotional stress. One of the many useful lessons that history can teach is the change of judgement on a particular course of action after a lapse of time, when fuller knowledge is available, when tempers have cooled and the long term results are clear.

In conclusion, let me say that I do not minimise the difficulties of using source material; much study and preparation are required on the part of the teacher and much discretion in their use. This method is not the complete or only answer to more effective history teaching. Nevertheless, I am convinced that by using the original sources wherever possible the teacher will make history live in a way that many have failed to do previously; the children will have a truer understanding of the past, a better appreciation of the necessity of reaching an unbiased judgement, and a sounder background for examining present day problems.

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A NOTE ON THE JOHN HOLT ARCHIVES

(Submitted by Cecil Holt)

LIKE MANY of his Victorian contemporaries, John Holt was an inveterate hoarder of letters and documents, especially if they concerned his business. In the latter half of the nineteenth century filing systems in small businesses such as his were either primitive or non-existent, neither was the volume of paper so great or so varied as to need much filing.

The usual fate of incoming correspondence that had served its purpose was for it to be stuffed into a large envelope suitably inscribed, or bundled together with an elastic band, and then thrown into a cupboard or drawer to accumulate dust.

Outgoing letters were a little more orderly as they were usually written by hand in press copy books, and the flimsy copy remained in the book as a permanent file.

John Holt & Company (Liverpool) Limited was not incorporated until 1897. Previously it had been a partnership of three brothers; it was natural therefore, that most of the correspondence was addressed to the partners personally, and when they died their papers passed to their children and not to the Company.

Shortly after the recent war, a member of the family who knew that his father had some manuscript diaries of John Holt, asked to be allowed to see them with a view to having them privately printed and published. He was given the key of a large cupboard, and permission to see the diaries with the proviso that he should put the contents of the cupboard into some order.

On opening this cupboard he was confronted with four or five shelves crammed with envelopes, and brown paper parcels, black with fifty years or more of Liverpool grime. Among its contents were over a hundred letters written to John Holt by Mary Kingsley, photostat copies of which have recently been acquired by Ibadan University.

In odd spare hours the very amateur archivist disappeared into clouds of black dust, and at the end of several months had rough-sorted and filed the documents in the cupboard. His interest being now thoroughly aroused, he realised that if his father had this collection it was probable that some of his other relatives might have similar hoards. After some badgering, more cupboards and drawers were opened to him, old tin trunks were dumped in his office, and parcels arrived by post from Lincolnshire where John Holt lived after retirement. Down in the basement of the office building more boxes and parcels were discovered, and what had started as an innocent enquiry had become a major operation. It took several years to find and bring this mass of material into some state of order and cleanliness, and in 1956 Mr. John Flint of London University undertook the task of classifying and cataloguing the documents.

This has now been completed, and it is expected that the catalogue will be printed in the near future.

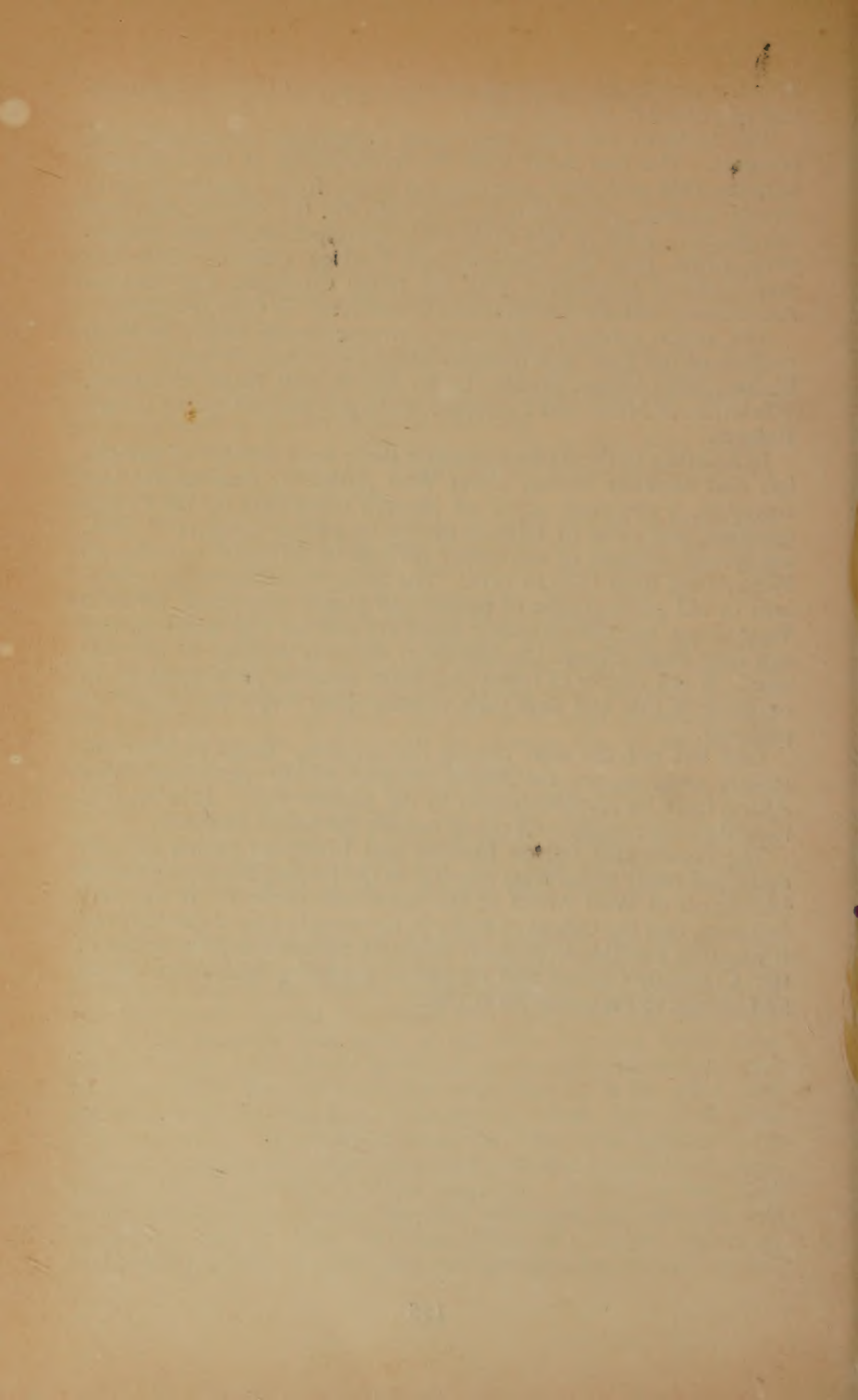
The archives fall into two main categories—commercial and political. The first deals with the development of the Company between 1868 and 1915, and includes letters from Coasters descriptive of trading, particularly in Fernando Po, the South Coast, and Oil Rivers. Also in this category is correspondence with competitive firms, and the Colonial and Foreign Offices. There are documents in connection with the Niger Company, and African Association, including some letters to and from Sir George Goldie.

The other category embraces correspondence about political matters of the time, and includes letters from Mary Kingsley, Mary Slessor, Alice Green, Blyden, E. D. Morel, and Roger Casement. The letters of Morel and Casement are largely on the topic of Congo Reform.

In addition to these two categories there are a number of pamphlets and booklets written about West Africa by missionaries and travellers, a complete set of all Morel's pamphlets on the Congo question, and a few by Edward Blyden on various subjects. There are several volumes of newspaper cuttings of particular reference to West Africa from 1870 to 1915. The archives contain large collections of old photographs of people and places, connected with the West Coast, but unfortunately many are untitled and undated, and can only await chance identification, which is unlikely at this late date. It is a matter of regret that many amateur photographers, in omitting to title and date their photographs, forget the interest of posterity.

Last but not the least among the archives, things perhaps not strictly archives, are the bound volumes of the periodical *West Africa* from its commencement to the present day. It is believed to be the only complete set extant outside the British Museum.

The bombs that fell on London and Liverpool during the war destroyed many documents relating to the trading history of British Merchants in West Africa in the nineteenth century. It was very fortunate that the Offices of Holts in Liverpool escaped disaster, and it was thus possible to preserve intact an almost complete record of the Company's origin and expansion beginning with John Holt's first voyage to Fernando Po in 1862.



*Contributions to this journal are welcome and should be sent to the
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